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THOMAS CHALMERS' POOR RELIEF THEORIES

AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION

IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

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ABBREVIATIONS

B.P.L.	Boston Public Library
Brown, <u>Chalmers</u>	Brown, S.J., <u>Thomas Chalmers and the Godly Commonwealth</u> (Oxford, 1982).
C.P.	Chalmers' Papers, New College Library, Edinburgh.
C.W.	Chalmers, T., <u>The Collected Works of Thomas Chalmers</u> , 25 vols. (Glasgow, 1835-42).
<u>G.B.R.</u>	<u>Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Glasgow, 1809-1837</u> , vols. x, xi, xii, ed. Renwick, R. (Glasgow, 1915).
G.S.M.	Strathclyde Regional Archives Glasgow General Session Minute Book, January 1819 - July 1832.
G.T.H.M.	Mitchell Library, Glasgow Town's Hospital: Minutes of Directors' Quarterly Meetings, 1732-1846.
G.U.L.	Glasgow University Library.
Hanna, <u>Memoirs</u>	Hanna, W., <u>Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Thomas Chalmers</u> , 4 vols. (Edinburgh, 1849-52).
HR	Heritors' Records
KSR	Kirk Session Records.
M.L.	Mitchell Library.
N.L.S.	National Library of Scotland.
<u>N.S.A.</u>	<u>The New Statistical Account of Scotland</u> , 15 vols. (Edinburgh, 1845).
<u>S.A.</u>	<u>The Statistical Account of Scotland</u> , ed. Sinclair, J., 21 vols. (Edinburgh, 1791-9).
<u>S.H.R.</u>	<u>Scottish Historical Review</u>
S.R.A.	Strathclyde Regional Archives.
St. A.U.L.	St. Andrews University Library.

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ABSTRACT

There are three main themes in this thesis. Firstly, an analysis of the development of Thomas Chalmers' poor relief theories. Secondly, an evaluation of their impact on his contemporaries at home and abroad. Lastly, the establishment of their degree of success when put into practice in the early nineteenth century.

Chalmers' ideas on poverty and pauperism are usually presented as having been formed relatively early on in his life and remaining fairly static throughout. Using the surviving correspondence, Chalmers' diaries and writings, this thesis traces the origin of his poor relief ideas in Enlightenment concepts and demonstrates the impact of the various stages of Chalmers' career upon them. In particular, Chalmers' conversion to evangelical Christianity, his experiences as a minister in a large parish in industrialising Glasgow, his life as a professor in St. Andrews and Edinburgh, and his involvement in the Disruption of the Church of Scotland are all considered as regards their contribution to his poor relief solution. At the same time, the popularity of his poor relief ideas among many of his contemporaries is explored and explained as the product in some cases of similar educational background, common social problems facing many industrialising areas in the period, and Chalmers' influence as a teacher and writer.

The major practical experiment in poor relief and pastoral care embarked upon by Chalmers in St. John's parish in Glasgow is described at some length. The surviving evidence among the parish papers and correspondence concerning the work of the agency of deacons, elders and teachers is examined. The emerging picture is of a parish that for a time had dedicated pastors and lay helpers working to improve its moral, spiritual and material welfare, but which was successful

only in terms of its educational facilities. For the first time it is proven that the poor relief side of the St. John's experiment was a failure, both financially and practically.

The other attempts and their failure to implement Chalmers' poor relief theories in the nineteenth century are also considered, using the surviving kirk session records, parish histories and correspondence. In conclusion, Chalmers is shown by the end of his life to have concentrated more on evangelisation than political economy, the conversion and education of the people as opposed to their immediate material improvement.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION - Thess. 3, 10-12 : 'This we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat'; Prov. 19, 17 : 'He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given, will he pay him again.'¹

At some point in a nation's history great men may appear as heroes or anti-heroes, assuming almost a mythical status. Perhaps invaluable as the foci of a nation's pride or veneration, they pose a difficult problem for the historian as he struggles to disentangle the 'fact' from the legend. While not doubting the potential influence of a single man or woman at certain times in a country's history, the historian must discern what other trends were moulding people's lives and contributing towards the evolution of such a figurehead. This problem confronts any student of Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847). He lived in an age of contrast, when Scotland was entering the modern industrial and urban age and yet where two out of every three Scots lived outside the thirty towns which were growing centres of industry and had over 5,000 inhabitants.² His era was one fraught with ecclesiastical, social and political problems that were both a product of and complicated by the sheer numbers of people involved as Scotland's population grew by one and a half million between 1755 and 1851.³ Chalmers' life touched upon many aspects of these problems, and his voluminous printed works and their contemporary popularity bear witness to his interest in and influence upon the issues

1. Texts from J. MacLaurin, The Case of the Poor Consider'd or the Great Advantages of Erecting a Public Manufactory for Maintaining and Employing the Poor (Glasgow, 1729), p. 1.

2. I.A. Levitt and T.C. Smout, The State of the Scottish Working Class in 1843 (Edinburgh, 1979), p. 6.

3. R.H. Campbell, The Rise and Fall of Scottish Industry, 1707-1939 (Edinburgh, 1980), p. 9.

involved.¹ One of those issues was the growing problem of poor relief in a nascent industrial society, and it is Chalmers' relationship to that problem that this thesis will discuss.

Scottish society was changing in many respects throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These changes were accompanied by a great degree of stress, but affected different parts of the country in a variety of ways. A mixed agrarian - commercial - industrial economy which changed in emphasis of one or other of those aspects as one moved up and down the country and from east to west, produced different reactions and varying feelings of urgency about such problems as over-population, poor sanitary conditions, and lack of churches and schools. The eighteenth century Highland landscape of small scale agriculture and fishing was already being altered by the clearances and the introduction of sheep farming. The West Lowlands was a growing centre for the manufacture of textiles, both within a domestic craft economy and in the first factories. The Lothians and Fife concentrated on mining and agriculture, the latter increasingly being tackled in a more efficient manner. The Borders had a mixed agricultural and craft economy. This diversity of economic conditions also gave rise to a variety of practical responses to the question of how best to relieve the poor, although it has been concluded that the end result was a remarkably uniform approach to the problem itself.²

It is useful to point out that England was facing similar

1. In the Rev. Hugh Watt, D.D., The Published Works of Dr. Thomas Chalmers - A Descriptive List (Edinburgh, 1943), there are eighty-six pages of Chalmers' works.

2. R.A. Cage, The Scottish Poor Law, 1745-1845 (Edinburgh, 1981), chapters 2 and 3, pp. 19-66.

problems, although slightly earlier than Scotland and was more publicly involved in a crisis over its poor relief system at the turn of the century.¹ Influenced by the theories of Malthus and Ricardo, and worried by the growth of misery and crime in the cities, some Englishmen were agitating for a stricter control if not the abolition of official poor relief, as a contributory factor to the problem. It is interesting that one such writer on London poverty and crime was a Scotsman, Partick Colquhoun (1774-1820). A Glasgow merchant who moved to London in 1780, Colquhoun categorised the poor into "innocent", "remediable" and "culpable" (the largest group) and advocated the importance of social control through a joint framework of religious and moral education plus efficient policing.² Such a movement to curtail official poor relief was also apparent on the continent in the work of Baron von Voght in Hamburg. Voght visited England and Scotland in the 1790's and helped to crystallise the thoughts of those concerned with the problem as well as being influenced himself by developments in Britain, particularly in Glasgow.³

1. J.R. Poynter, Society and Pauperism. English Ideas on Poor Relief, 1795-1834 (London, 1969), provides an interesting comparative insight into the English situation.

2. P. Colquhoun, A Treatise on Indigence (London, 1806), pp. 11, 13, 110-138, 281; R. Pieris, The Contributions of Patrick Colquhoun to Social Theory and Social Philosophy (n.p., 1954), pp. 5, 22, 25.

3. Baron von Voght, Account of the Management of the Poor in Hamburgh, since the year 1788 (Edinburgh, 1795) pp. 1-3; C.L. Mowat, The Charity Organisation Society 1869-1913 (London, 1961), p. 10.

This indeed was one occasion when England was looking to its northern neighbour to provide a solution to its increasing social problems. This solution was portrayed as a distinctively Scottish poor relief system - a system based on similar laws to the English one (the Acts of 1574, 1597, 1672, 1698) but which had evolved into one that appeared the direct opposite of its southern counterpart. Where the English scheme appeared to many as dangerously liberal in its 'doling' out of relief, the Scots had acquired the reputation of holding back to the last.

What exactly was this 'traditional' Scottish attitude towards poverty and its relief? To answer this it is first necessary to examine how the system itself operated. The mechanics of the provision of relief in eighteenth century Scotland, as these had evolved since 1560, have often been described.¹ In rural areas relief was administered mainly by the kirk session of each parish along with the local landowners, the heritors, who usually appear to have left the daily management to the minister and elders, only intervening when there was any question of a tax on themselves to meet the poor bill. In the towns it came under the aegis of the town council and magistrates, who similarly usually delegated the duties to the kirk

1. G. Nicholls, A History of the Scotch Poor Law (London, 1856), pp. 1-111; R.P. Lamond, The Scottish Poor Laws, Their History, Policy and Operation (Glasgow, 1892), pp. 25-47; A.A. Cormack, Poor Relief in Scotland, An Outline of the Growth and Administration of the Poor Laws in Scotland (Aberdeen, 1932), pp.36-51; T. Ferguson, The Dawn of Scottish Social Welfare (Edinburgh, 1948), pp. 166-189; L.J. Saunders, Scottish Democracy 1815-1840 (Edinburgh, 1950), pp. 192-207; T.C. Smout (ed.), The Search for Wealth and Stability (London, 1979), pp. 199-217; Cage, op. cit., pp. 1-66.

sessions of its individual parishes, either operating singly or together in a General Session. Again, the lay section of the administration only seemed to involve itself if the question of taxation arose. Thus the practicalities of poor relief were inextricably linked with the established Church of Scotland.

Throughout the early part of the eighteenth century, it seemed to make sense to entrust any official charity to that natural protagonist of Christian charity. That this in itself did not constitute any major theoretical problem is borne out by such authors on poor relief as the Rev. John MacLaurin (1693-1754), who in 1729 wrote of poverty and its relief as a natural concern of Christians, enjoined by Scripture.¹ Yet at the same time, MacLaurin was writing this to support a partial abdication of the Church's responsibility. He was in favour of the establishment of a poor house/hospital in Glasgow in 1733 to cope with the growing number of poor in the city. This Town's Hospital was to be run on Christian principles, but it involved lay officials, and was a complication of more recent practice. Such institutions were to become more common in the Scottish towns of the eighteenth century, as Glasgow's example was followed by Aberdeen (1739), Edinburgh (1743, 1759 and 1762) Paisley (1752) and Dumfries (1753). Thus a dichotomy was already present in the eighteenth century between what was considered ideal - the Church's supervision of the poor - and what was practical, as larger concentrations of people in the towns became more widespread. This dichotomy became even more apparent whenever the question of a legal taxation or assessment was raised to fund any deficits in the relief system. As the eighteenth century progressed,

1. J. MacLaurin, op. cit., pp. 1-2.

it became increasingly apparent that heritors and magistrates who were content to let the ecclesiastical officials oversee the distribution of any free-will church offerings, were immediately determined to exercise their legal rights to be involved in the process whenever there was a threat of a tax on their goods and property to meet the growing number of occasions when there was a deficit.

The underlying principles of the operation of this poor relief system revolved around two questions : who were legally entitled to relief, and how should that relief be raised? The English system had developed into one that incorporated an apparently elastic category of those who should be relieved, and frequently had recourse to compulsory legal assessments to supplement voluntary church collections to foot an ever-increasing bill. Hence the backlash at the end of the eighteenth century against a system which included hand-outs to make up wages, grain supplements, workhouses, and a whole host of expedients, yet was accompanied by massive numbers on relief and increasingly unmanageable costs. Scotland had kept a more rigorous check on its poor. The latter were divided into two groups. The 'regular' poor were those relieved as of a legal right by a permanent weekly or monthly pension. This category was made up of the aged, impotent (orphans, widows and cripples), and the insane. These were supplied out of a proportion of the church door collections, as instructed by the 1693 Privy Council Proclamation. Fines and mortifications to the church might also be used for such poor. If all these together were insufficient, then recourse might be had to a legal tax, based on an assessment of property. Temporary relief might be given to the casual, 'occasional' poor - those in need through famine, sickness or an accident. Such poor appear to have been relieved out of the remainder of the church collections, although the

church was not legally obliged to do so, and so this group was at the mercy of the compassion of the individual minister and his kirk session. Any able-bodied persons who were poor through, for example, lack of work appear to have been relieved by voluntary subscriptions or special collections as an extraordinary measure. Even more so than the casual poor, however, this group was considered to have no legal claim to such help. All recipients of official charity were expected to have a three year settlement in the parish before they could be granted relief. It was as industrialisation advanced, and as large parts of the population began to be mobile in the wake of clearances or famine in their search for work, that the Scottish relief system became stretched beyond its limits. A necessary corollary of this was the questioning and evaluation of its basic premises, and these problems were highlighted most particularly during Chalmers' lifetime.

Behind this strict definition of the poor and the emphasis on the voluntary charity of church-goers relieving want, there was what some have regarded as a Calvinistic attitude of the necessity to encourage sober, moral Christians. To rely on others for help in any official capacity was somehow degrading and tantamount to a declaration of immorality, a weakness of character in not being self-sufficient.¹ Whereas in England there was room for interpreting poor relief practice, if not its theory, as allowing simple economic want to be a major qualification for relief, this was not widely apparent in Scotland at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Thus, even when help was extended, it was to be as little as possible, the recipients being at all times exhorted to do as much for themselves as they

1. Saunders, op cit., p. 193.

could, and being encouraged to look to neighbours and friends to help out. The 'godly commonwealth' had no need nor place for lax spongers on society.

Yet this prevailing attitude was to be challenged as the nineteenth century advanced. With hindsight it is apparent how such an approach would give rise to many anomalies in an increasingly industrial society. The cost of living/standard of living debate for pre-industrial and early industrial times continues unresolved, but most historians would agree that during that period a significant section of Britain's growing population was being turned into a mass of 'displaced persons'. It was impossible to keep up with the shifting situation within many hitherto specialised handcrafts as mechanisation took over the various different stages of production. The resulting exit of some into the streets of the large cities and towns to make their way as best they could from day to day, and the elevation of others whose skills were still required into the ranks of a labour aristocracy seemed more the result of fate or misfortune than immorality.¹ It is true that there was a selfish, financial barrier to accepting the former explanation. As Mitchison has pointed out², it was in the interest of those middle and upper classes in the towns who had a say in relief to find reasons not to expand that relief since they also funded it. Yet there was also a mental/philosophical barrier. The main purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate that Thomas Chalmers was indeed the prime exemplar and one of the leading

1. For descriptions of this see E.J. Hobsbawm, Industry and Empire (Harmondsworth, 1972), pp. 79-96.

2. R. Mitchison, 'The Creation of the Disablement Rule for the Scottish Poor Law', in T.C. Smout (ed.), The Search for Wealth and Stability (London, 1979), p. 208.

perpetuators of that barrier. However, the success of his writings and experience in the field of poor relief was largely due to the fact that he was not unique. He provided credibility and leadership, but to ideas that were perhaps largely the product of a Calvinist ethos, but were also rooted in the eighteenth century Scottish Enlightenment. The latter provided fertile ground among the educated classes for the reception of what was being described by the early 19th century as 'traditional' to the Scots' dealings with their poor, but which was only being fully recorded for the first time at the end of the eighteenth century - the tradition, apparently, had not taken long to establish itself.¹

Chalmers' success in publicising this particularly Scottish attitude to poverty and its relief was considerable. I will show that a significant number of people did attempt to copy his practical demonstrations of the theory and were guided by his writings in Scotland, England, on the continent, and across the Atlantic. However, this thesis will also demonstrate how his own experiment did fail, even on Chalmers' own terms. Nonetheless, it will have to be remembered that the ideas of this Chalmers' school of thought have been echoed today in the twentieth century.² It would be wrong, therefore, simply to dismiss those ideas as anachronistic and meaningless in a modern industrial and scientific society.

This then was the 'traditional' Scottish system of poor relief at the beginning of the nineteenth century. A system in turn praised by most nineteenth century authors, and condemned by many in the

1. 'Ibid.'

2. See below, pp. 407-11.

twentieth century. According to Mitchison, it in fact demonstrated an attitude new to the late eighteenth century, and perpetuated by nineteenth century authors. It bore little relation to actual poor relief practice in the eighteenth century, when there is evidence of parishes, for example, helping without hesitation those able-bodied suffering from temporary agricultural crises, since the latter did not recur frequently and therefore posed no threat to the legal poor relief system.¹ Why, then, did a far stricter attitude emerge later on? From an analysis of some of the Scottish pamphlets and literature on poor relief written during this period, it would appear that the impact of the eighteenth century Scottish Enlightenment was important. One of the main results of the Enlightenment was the evolution of a distinct Scottish philosophy of society, considered by some as a precursor of the more modern specialised study of sociology.² Revolving round such figures as Hume, Smith, Ferguson, Robertson and Millar, and through the universities infiltrating the ranks of the legal professions and the Church, it was an influential moulder of eighteenth century thought.³ The common tenet of these thinkers was that man was naturally a social being whose uniform nature could be traced throughout the four economic phases of society: primitive, pastoral, agrarian and the current commercial one :

1. R. Mitchison, 'The Making of the old Scottish Poor Law', Past and Present, no. 63 (May 1974), pp. 58-93.

2. E.g., A.C. Chitnis, The Scottish Enlightenment. A Social History (London, 1976), pp. 6, 118; A.W. Swingewood, 'The Scottish Enlightenment and the Rise of Sociology: with special reference to the social theories of Adam Ferguson, John Millar and William Robertson' (London University, Ph.D. thesis, 1969).

3. See Chitnis, op. cit., p. 117; N. Phillipson, 'The Scottish Enlightenment' and 'Adam Smith as a Scottish Moralist' (typescript, 1980); G.E. Davie, The Scottish Enlightenment (Historical Association Pamphlet, London, 1981)

Mankind are so much the same, in all times and places, that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular. Its chief use is only to¹ discover the constant and universal principles of human nature.

At the centre of this universal human nature was the concept of man's sympathy as the key to his moral judgement and hence to the laws that held society together. This sympathy was distinct from a simple emotion of compassion. It was rather described as an inborn ability in man to look at an individual action and, from his ensuing emotions of love or hate, to ascribe a moral judgement on the person who had perpetrated the act. Since this sympathy was a universal attribute all men would arrive at similar moral judgements for similar situations, and so society would function smoothly. While differing in emphasis on how exactly this sympathy operated, the end result was the concentration of these Scottish thinkers on man's individual social conscience.² This social conscience could be encouraged by education and custom, and provided an innate moral sense in man, an "internalised ethics of conscience", as opposed to morality coming solely from an outside source such as religion. This view was endorsed by that group within the Church of Scotland that was to become known as the Moderate Party, and which was to dominate the Church by the later 1760's. These ministers were intent on embracing the world of learning as it was developing in their age and on somehow incorporating it within the teaching of the Church. Thus the Moderates became increasingly connected with this moral philosophy being taught in the universities, their aim having been to 'integrate' the Church within this view of society.³

1. S.K. Wertz, 'Hume, History and Human Nature', Journal of the History of Ideas, 36 (1975), quoted on p. 481.

2. From a lecture by G.E. Davie at the University of Edinburgh on 6 November 1980 entitled 'The Scottish Enlightenment'.

3. Chitnis, op. cit., p. 69.

What, then, did all of this have to do with ideas on poverty and its relief? The most important point to realise is that this philosophy of society was being taught in the Scottish universities in the second half of the eighteenth century.¹ Thus it influenced men of university education throughout the professions, including ministers. This system of thought was still taught at the turn of the century - very ably in the case of Dugald Stewart (1753-1828) in Edinburgh.² Although the Moderates party's monopoly within the Church began to wane in the early nineteenth century, I would suggest that by then this philosophy had become distinct from any links it may have had with a particular group in the church, and as a system of thought had entered the consciousness of the educated in Scotland.

An example of the immediate impact of this Scottish philosophy on those contemporaries involved in poor relief may be seen in the work of the Rev. John McFarlan (1740 - 1788) in his Inquiries Concerning the Poor, 1782. McFarlan referred to Hume's four states of society and pointed out the particular problem of the falling demand for certain goods in the current manufacturing and commercial state. However, when it came to the problem of relieving any poverty in the current economic situation, he again showed the influence of the Scottish philosophers. He said that man had a 'natural inclination' installed by God at creation, to relieve his fellow man in want.³ Just as man's moral sense was presented as preserving the civic

1. R. Olson, 'Scottish Philosophy and Mathematics, 1750-1830', Journal of the History of Ideas, 32 (1971), pp.30-1.

2. Swingewood, 'op. cit.', Introduction.

3. J. McFarlan, Inquiries Concerning the Poor (Edinburgh, 1782), p. 9.

structure of society through its agreement on what was right and wrong, McFarlan argued that there was an innate mechanism, common to all men, that was triggered off when faced with the want of a fellow human being. The logical conclusion was that there existed an assured natural solution to the problem of poor relief. For McFarlan at least this reasoning resulted in what would later be described as a 'traditional' Scottish outlook on poverty. Those who had a legal right to relief were described as those suffering from "natural" and "unavoidable" causes of poverty - the sick, aged, children, widows, lunatics, and those struck by disasters such as theft, flood or fire. For such poor there was no need for the state to invent or impose an elaborately structured "artificial" system of relief. They had a natural claim and would be naturally relieved by their fellow men when the latter saw their need. It was the rest of the poor, struggling because of "their own immediate fault, or by their former bad conduct" that constituted the moral problem. For McFarlan the simple fact of being poor economically did not necessarily mean that man or society should fill the gap. Some moral judgement as to who should receive relief was necessary, since he believed the bulk of poverty was due to immorality in the first place. For these poor, the effect of society simply stepping in artificially to give relief would be disastrous. Far better was the natural system where individuals would not provide relief out of their own pockets and hence risk encouraging "sloth and profligacy", if they considered the need to have been an avoidable one in the first place.¹

1. Ibid., pp. 5, 190, 23, 38-9.

It is interesting to note that Mitchison considers Chalmers as being the originator of that early nineteenth century attitude regarding the ability of poor relief to ruin the recipient. She cites Chalmers' sermon of 1808, when he referred to the power of charity to corrupt those it intended to help.¹ Yet McFarlan's statement above was written a quarter of a century before Chalmers preached. His work reveals that any stringent Scottish attitude had its origins long before Chalmers, and was influenced by Scottish Enlightenment thought. He portrayed a poor relief system that was both natural and, therefore, potentially universal in its application, no matter which economic stage society had revealed. This is remarkably similar to the Scottish philosophers' arguments on the origins of moral judgements lying in the hearts and reactions of men and not imposed from the outside, although endorsed by religion and teaching.² Chalmers was to come back to this line of thinking, but he did not originate it.

Thus McFarlan considered any system of poor relief that relied upon a legal tax for its funds as being tainted and artificial. His solution was ultimately to abolish all legal poor rates, but this was to be done gradually by encouraging more conscientious lay workers from the Scottish and English upper ranks to become acquainted with the poor and so more sensible of their real needs. Once more this anticipated Chalmers. In the growing towns, where he acknowledged the problem was increasing, a paid inspector should also keep a rigorous check of the poor, and keep a register of them.

As well as the apparent influence of Enlightenment thought on

1. R. Mitchison, 'Creation of the Disablement Rule', pp. 206-7.

2. McFarlan, op.cit., pp. 180, 187-8.

McFarlan, the impact of Adam Smith's The Wealth of Nations has to be considered. McFarlan agreed with the idea of a free market in labour and confidently asserted that it would present no problems to Scotland, where there had been no real unemployment for two centuries. This was also to be echoed by Chalmers in the nineteenth century. Despite the increasing frequency of trade depressions and the consequent unemployment of many in the cities and towns, this attitude proved a difficult one for Chalmers and others to shake off.

Similar assurances that every thing could be brought under man's control, that no long-term poor relief problems were insurmountable, and that society was progressing positively towards a better state, are apparent in other works of the period: for example, in the Rev. W. Porteous' (1735-1812) pamphlet on poor relief in Glasgow in 1783,¹ in the entry for Glasgow in the Old Statistical Account,² and in Chalmers' first notable work in 1808.³ It is significant that these comfortable, confident statements were all from the mouths of ministers. Although it would be wrong to suggest everyone was in agreement over this,⁴ there is enough evidence to demonstrate it was a

1. W. Porteous, A Letter to the citizens of Glasgow - A short view of the management of the Poor Fund under the administration of the General Session (Glasgow, 1783). Porteous echoed McFarlan's fears that if there were "a certain and a liberal provision" for the poor, they would take advantage of it and so lose the incentive to work hard and be frugal, p.1. He did not go as far as McFarlan's advocacy of the abolition of official charity, but he, like McFarlan, wanted a greater scrutiny of the poor.

2. S.A., vol. 5, "Glasgow", p. 526, the entry for Glasgow concluded that friendly societies were the best insurance and the best solution for poverty since they kept the working man industrious and did not loosen the bonds of "natural affection".

3. T. Chalmers, An Enquiry into the extent and stability of National Resources (Edinburgh, 1808); see p. 20 below.

4. For example, T. Tod, Observations on Dr. McFarlan's Inquiries concerning the state of the poor (Edinburgh, 1783).

definite school of thought by the early nineteenth century.

As the new century opened it was these ministers' ideas on poor relief that pre-dominated and convinced many of the upper classes of their veracity as costs of poor relief in the increasing number of assessed parishes in Scotland mounted.¹ Some writers were now also beginning to cite Malthus' writings on population in support of their theories, arguing that as the population outstripped the food supply an automatic legal relief system would exacerbate the entire problem by artificially removing any innate desires to live within the limited means available. For example, in 1813 James Cruickshank in Aberdeen described the poor in the by then familiar terms of natural and artificial poor² with no suggestion of a legitimate category for those who might want to work but could not obtain it. Cruickshank also proposed a method of providing for relief very similar to McFarlan's. He argued that 'true sympathy' with a man's impoverished situation would be accompanied on the part of the observer by a desire to investigate each case to ensure that the correct moral judgement and the natural reaction of giving charity were safeguarded. Thus he was in favour of the Edinburgh Society for the Suppression of Beggars, for the Relief of Occasional Distress, and the Edinburgh Commissioners of Police and 'gentlemen' in the city.³ The keynote of this society's

1. Before 1700 only three parishes in Scotland levied a compulsory assessment; by 1800 it had risen to ninety-six; by 1818 to 145: P.P. Sess. 1818 (400) vol. 5, Third Report from the Select Committee on the Poor Laws (1818) with an Appendix, Containing Returns from the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, p. 29.

2. J. Cruickshank, Observations on the Scotch system of Poor Laws; together with the explanation of a plan for the suppression of vagrants, street beggars, and imposters; for the relief of occasional Distress; and the Encouragement of industry among the Poor (Aberdeen, 1813), p.3.

3. Ibid., pp. 20-35, 39.

charter was to rigourously investigate its distribution of charity - that is, in favour of the morally deserving.

Another method suggested in the early nineteenth century to help avoid any increasing poor relief burden was the institution of savings banks for the lower classes. The first such parish bank was founded by the Rev. Henry Duncan (1774 - 1846) in the parish of Ruthwell in 1810. Again the idea was prominent that the lower classes could and should help themselves as much as possible by a moral and strict management of their resources, and that in this lay the only lasting solution to poverty and its relief. Duncan wrote in his 1815 account of the Bank and his evidence to the English Commission on the Poor Laws in 1819 about his aversion to any assessment system. The poor should first look to a natural charity among themselves, relatives and neighbours, and then to the church and private charity. Once more the impact of eighteenth century philosophical reasoning was apparent. Compulsory enactments "contributed to destroy those feelings of reciprocal affections which form the strongest and most delightful bond of society", and it was a "contradiction in terms" to attempt to provide "compulsory benevolence".¹

These attitudes were summed up in the 1818 General Assembly Report on poor relief, compiled in response to a request from the 1817 Select Committee on the English Poor Law. Arguments in England against assessments were gathering force. The General Assembly report responded in kind, and simply endorsed what by then was being openly described as traditionally Scottish.² Thus a system of relief was

1. H. Duncan, An essay in the nature and advantages of parish banks (Edinburgh, 1815), pp. 20-21.

2. P.P. Sess. 1818 (400), vol. 5, Appendix no. 3: Letter from the Earl of Hardwicke to the Moderator, "the Scotch have uniformly proceeded on the principle that every individual is bound to provide for himself by his own labour", p. 54.

described in which the minister and elders, with their intimate knowledge of the character of their parishioners only distributed relief after close scrutinies of all applications. The great 'evil' of assessments was reported as having been avoided in the vast majority of Scottish parishes, and, where it had crept in, it was duly described as having the disadvantageous effects on voluntary charity and on the character of the population that many theorists confidently argued it must have. Those admitted to relief were given a pittance from the only official source that did not have this debilitating effect, the kirk session funds, it being expected that relatives and friends would supply the rest. When unexpected economic depression struck, as in the years after the Napoleonic Wars, then voluntary charity was put into motion on a larger scale by the wealthy, and this was portrayed as easily meeting any 'temporary' needs in the towns.

With this 1818 Report the impact of the eighteenth century Enlightenment concept of voluntary, individual and universal moral contracts to meet the needs of the poor is seen to have entered the language and views of the official Church, overriding any specific Moderate/Evangelical party boundaries. Relying mainly on church door collections:

cherishes habits of humanity and benevolence in one class while it imparts relief to another; and while it is the discharge of a Christian duty, it confers the most valuable good upon society, by binding its different ranks together through reciprocal feelings of kindness and good will. It adorns the church, and adds strength and virtue and happiness to the state.¹

As Cage points out, the Report's main conclusion that assessments caused the extent and expense of pauperism to increase was in fact

1. Ibid., p.28.

erroneous given its data which it wrongly interpreted.¹ What is particularly important here, however, is not the actual data, but the theories behind it. When studying Chalmers and developments in poor relief theory over the next twenty-seven years in Scotland, it is illuminating to identify the premises this Report was working on and its overall tone of confidence. The 'problem' of poor relief was presented as easily solved - and it was assumed that that meant any problem of poverty would also disappear. First of all, where there had been deviations from a complete voluntary relief system, as in some Scottish towns, some Border parishes, and more particularly throughout England, then those in charge should revert to no assessments, to a simplified system of more personal charity controlled by the kirk sessions. Also, in the area of poor relief the church and state were at one: the church promoting Christianity through encouraging the exercise of neighbourly compassion, which was also portrayed as a secular, natural virtue with a ripple effect on the feelings of good-will necessary for society to function as a cohesive whole.

Ironically, as is often the case, it was as this became the church's official line, that signs of disquiet became evident among some of her ministers working on the parish level in the towns. One such minister was the Rev. Robert Burns (1789 - 1856), a minister in Paisley for thirty-four years, 1811-1845. Even at the time of the General Assembly Report, Burns questioned some of the statistics and premises about the 'necessary' evil of all official charity. He expanded his own replies to the Assembly's questionnaire into a

1. Cage, op. cit., p. 115: the population of the unassessed parishes was almost twice that of the assessed (640,015 and 339,879), but the numbers of paupers in the unassessed was more than twice that of the assessed (19,786 and 8,385).

pamphlet in 1818 on the duties of elders and the management of the poor, which he extended in 1819 into a large book on poor relief. Burns is an interesting figure. It will be useful to look at the similarities in this 1819 work to what has been discussed above.

Burns had strong evangelical roots. His father had been involved in the Cambuslang revival of 1742 and Burns had inherited his evangelical outlook. Like Chalmers in 1800, Burns attended Dugald Stewart's moral philosophy classes in Edinburgh in 1804-5. The influence of those classes may be discerned in Burns' analysis of the workings of charity, again indicating that the Scottish philosophers' concept of society had moved out of any Moderate monopoly. Burns described private charity as "recommended and enforced by the original feelings of the human mind". In the heart of every man, "by nature, there is implanted a principle of sympathy which leads him to feel for another's woe, and to stretch forth a helping hand".¹ This sympathy was distinctive for its "universality" among men.

Burns summed up the 'traditional' Scottish outlook, and indicated how all Scotsmen would do anything to avoid becoming official paupers; if help were needed the suppliant would try every other voluntary source of aid first, and as soon as his personal crisis was over, he would return to his "creditable independence".² Following this line of thought, Burns argued in favour of a system of charity controlled mainly by the church through the kirk sessions and limited to the deserving and those truly devoid of other resources. Even those receiving relief should also be helped by friends and should be

1. R. Burns, Historical Dissertations of the Law and practice of Great Britain, and particularly of Scotland, with regard to the poor (Edinburgh, 1819), p. 188 (Hereafter, Dissertations.)

2. Ibid., p. 104.

encouraged to do any work at all that they could. He also emphasised the importance of an adequate provision of education and churches in the maintenance of such a system.

Where Burns differed from the General Assembly Report was in his discussion of assessments. Overall, he was against the latter at this stage ¹, and cited Malthus and the political economists' views of the great evils accompanying an automatic claim to a large legal relief fund such as assessments provided. However, he did recognise the place for some form of more extended public charity in the shape of well organised benevolent societies to supplement the kirk sessions in the large towns with their growing social problems and their increasing lack of church and school provision. He argued in support of this that if anyone were truly against all public provision, then kirk session relief should also cease, since, although very limited in Scotland, it did constitute a legal relief system that could theoretically be relied upon through the simple fact of its existence.

Burns said that as opposed to this extreme stance, he was in favour of both kirk sessions and private societies - the latter could use the former's safeguards against being abused by carefully scrutinising the poor and so being discriminatory in its issue of relief.

It would appear from all this that Burns was moving towards the belief that there would have to be some sort of compromise between what he had presented as a notional, ideal poor relief system based solely on the workings of human nature, and one that would incorporate the economic conditions of the time. This move was conditioned by his experiences of a town like Paisley, heavily reliant on the fine

1. R.F. Burns, The Life and Times of the Rev. Robert Burns, D.D. (Toronto, 1872), p. 88: Burns later supported a legal provision for the poor as the industrial situation in Paisley further declined in the 1830s.

muslins industry. It consequently suffered all the more from the trade depression of 1817. Thus he went on to say that the principle of an individual's sympathy operating alone could also be "unsteady and capricious"¹, and needed to be controlled through public charitable societies with their capacity to check the claims of applicants, and so ensure that only the morally deserving received relief. In other words, the individual acting alone might be deceived, and in the last analysis his sympathy could not be relied upon in the large towns where it was more difficult to know everyone. This was a significant crack in the philosophical reasoning about society and man's relations to his fellow-man, employed earlier in his work by Burns, and by McFarlan and Duncan before him.

The evidence of the beginning of a movement away from a simplistic and confident view of the situation was repeated by two other Scottish ministers : Skene Ogilvy (1755 - 1831) and Stevenson Macgill (1765 - 1840). Both of these ministers argued directly against Malthus and the political economists' condemnation of all public charity. Ogilvy was the minister of Old Machar parish, Aberdeen, from 1784 to 1830. There is no trace in his work² of any belief in human nature having the main part to play in poor relief, but he was against an assessment system. He was worried by the increasing pauperism in his parish which the kirk session did not have the means to relieve. While supporting the principle of the local community helping one another, he, like Burns, thought the solution lay in voluntary public relief agencies, such as the Society for the Suppression of Begging,

1. Burns, Disserations, p. 195.

2. S. Ogilvy, Letter to the Heritors and Gentlemen of the parish of Old Machar (n. p., 1817). Ogilvy wrote in direct opposition to an anonymous article in the Edinburgh Review in March 1817 - that article was by Thomas Chalmers.

formed in Aberdeen in 1815, and similar to the Edinburgh one cited above. Such societies conducted a strict scrutiny of all applicants, and Ogilvy appealed to the heritors and gentlemen of his own parish to contribute generously to it and so stave off the advance of an assessment system.¹

Stevenson Macgill was minister in the populous Tron parish of Glasgow from 1797 to 1815. Concerned by his observations of the increasing want and misery of many of the inhabitants of this overcrowded part of the city, he went further than Ogilvy and Burns in his critique of the capability of the kirk sessions alone, and hence of any 'traditional' Scottish system, to meet the needs for relief in such districts. He actually spoke out for the need for a legal assessment in cities like Glasgow. In a discourse on poverty in 1819, he argued that any evils from assessments arose not from any inherent evils in the tax itself, but rather from the bad administration of that tax. He was angry with the bitter criticisms levelled by the 'economists' against such as himself, and railed against his being presented by them as:

...ignorant of the principles of human nature, unable to discern the consequences of their own conduct, incapable of enlarged views ...²

With respect to any argument centring on returning charity purely to the operation of Christian or human compassion, Macgill countered that in the case of the former virtue that was still no guarantee of complete relief since even in the early church the Greeks complained that their widows were neglected; and as regards the latter, simple

1. Ogilvy was successful in staving off assessments for a time, but they had been introduced by the time of N.S.A. for Old Machar - N.S.A., vol. 12, pp. 179-194.

2. S. Macgill, Discourses and Essays on Subjects of Public Interest (Edinburgh, 1819), p. 374.

human compassion was :

... a languid and inoperative principle, requiring continually to be aroused and stimulated; it is also transient and irregular; and is daily overcome by a thousand circumstances, even when it is strengthened by the most powerful motives, nay, assisted by the strongest feelings and affections of our nature ...¹

Macgill was the only one of the authors considered so far to define the poor simply as those in economic want.² Correspondingly, he argued, it was wrong always to associate poverty with vice. He still stated that those with a legal right to relief were only those conventionally regarded as such - that is, those who were unable to work through illness or infirmity. However, he was strong in his attestations that the able-bodied out of work through temporary economic distress should be given temporary relief. The form that relief should take ought to be left up to the individual communities with their varying needs, be they towns, cities or rural villages. He was definite, however, that assessments were a legitimate source in certain areas where the numbers in need were so great that otherwise many would go unrelieved and the burden of what relief there was would be unfairly levied only on church-goers, an increasingly small proportion of a city parish such as the Tron. Thus an assessment system could avoid the evils it was being accused of, if properly managed through strict control and investigation. The same conditions applied to any form of relief - pensions, food supplements, collections or charitable societies - each had its place.

This essay by Macgill is remarkable for its willingness to take into account "the unprecedented nature of the times in which we live",³

1. Ibid., p. 429.

2. Ibid., p. 406.

3. Ibid., p. 383.

and in portraying those times as being with the country to stay, not as simply a temporary setback. Moreover, he argued that a country's particular economic state did matter, as opposed to the arguments based on an acceptance of the Enlightenment interpretation of the universality of man's nature and hence of his reactions no matter what his economic surroundings.

From this brief summary of some of the attitudes and ideas concerning poverty and its relief at the start of the nineteenth century, it can be seen that it was a serious issue in Scotland. There was a distinct and entrenched mainline approach to it, as conveyed in the 1818 General Assembly Report, which was based on views of human nature and Christian charity. However, the facts of the situation were beginning to call the theory into serious question, and a few were beginning to realise this. It is against this backdrop that Chalmers' life and writings must be considered.

It is now necessary to examine Chalmers' background to establish where he fitted into all of the above. He was born into a pious church-going family on 17 March 1780 in Anstruther in Fife. His father, John Chalmers, was a small merchant and shopkeeper. His mother, Elizabeth, was a devout woman, involved in the local life of the parish, and kept busy with fourteen children. Anstruther itself was an insular community which Chalmers was to leave in 1791 to attend St. Andrew's University. There he studied mathematics, among other subjects, and in 1795 became a student of Divinity. In 1799 he went to Edinburgh where he studied mathematics and chemistry, returning in 1800 to attend Dugald Stewart's moral philosophy classes, and Dr. Robison's natural philosophy lectures. He was licensed as a preacher in 1799, and between then and 1803 he also tutored in a private family, served as an assistant minister in Cavers near Hawick and was a mathematics assistant in St. Andrews. In 1803 he entered his first

ministerial charge in Kilmany in Fife, where he was to stay till 1815 when he moved to Glasgow.

Our knowledge of Chalmers as a young boy and man is mainly derived from his biographer and son-in-law, William Hanna (1808 - 1882). Himself a Church of Scotland, and later Free Church minister, Hanna tended to emphasise the religious side of Chalmers' life. Hanna did use a vast amount of material for his biography, including letters, diaries, journals and personal reminiscences of contemporaries, but since he agreed with most of his father-in-law's theories and ideas, there is little critical analysis of these sources. For a long time Hanna's interpretation of such material was accepted more or less unquestioningly. Recently, however, more scholarly attention has been paid to these sources, and an array of revealing portrayals of Chalmers' character and ideas has been the result.¹ The sheer range of these studies provides more evidence of just how vast an impact Chalmers had on his times - in the world of church politics, the missions, at home and abroad, political economy, theology, and social problems.

In the specific area of poverty and Chalmers' ideas concerning it, much of Chalmers' development is as yet uncharted. This thesis aims to fill in those gaps. It is true that recently there have been studies on Chalmers and poor relief,² but none of these trace the

1. E.g., J. McCaffrey, 'Tholmas Chalmers and Social Change', S.H.R., 60 (April 1981), pp. 33-59. By the same author 'The Life of Thomas Chalmers' in The Practical and the Pious, ed. A.C. Cheyne (Edinburgh, 1985), pp. 31-64. Also in The Practical and the Pious, essays by Iain F. McIver, Ian A. Muirhead, Olive Checkland, Boyd Hilton and Friedhelm Voges, pp. 84-165. W.J. Roxborough, 'Thomas Chalmers and the Mission of the Church with special reference to the rise of the Missionary Movement in Scotland (Aberdeen University Ph.D. thesis, 1978).

2. E.g., Cage, op. cit., pp. 90-116; Brown, Chalmers, pp. 91-151; and R.A. Cage and E.O.A. Checkland, 'Thomas Chalmers and Urban Poverty: the St. John's Parish Experiment in Glasgow, 1819-1837', in Philosophical Journal, 13, 1, (Spring 1976), pp. 37-56.

origin and development of Chalmers' ideas, nor do they examine extensively the impact of those ideas on Scotland and elsewhere. Rather, Chalmers' main attempts to implement his theories in the St. John's experiment in Glasgow and later in the West Port in Edinburgh, have been the foci of attention as offering final proof of the success or failure of those theories. Yet in many ways that approach - still as yet inconclusive in its findings as regards St. John's¹ - is too narrow and leaves much unanswered. An examination of the origin of the ideas themselves and their place in Chalmers' overall views will explain their attractive appeal to other Scotsmen of his period. This study will also give a revealing insight into what was taking place in the theory of poor relief in England, Europe and America, and the influence of Chalmers on those developments.

The most important conclusion of any research on Chalmers' ideas on the relief of poverty is that his theories were not static, but rather developed and were conditioned by Chalmers' experiences.² Hanna gives the overall impression that Chalmers' ideas on this subject were formed very early in his career as a minister and remained more or less the same throughout. This approach is both unrealistic and misleading. In order to come to a more precise picture of his ideas it is necessary to examine his early life and studies, and the remainder of this chapter will examine the period up to 1815, before he moved to Glasgow.

As has been seen, Chalmers entered the ministry at an early age - he was licensed as a preacher in 1799 when he was only nineteen.

1. Cage and Checkland, 'op. cit.', have the most critical analysis of Chalmers' poor relief work, but many areas of Chalmers' ideas are omitted, and there is other evidence of its practical operation that I will cite.

2. Some of what follows is from my article 'Chalmers and Poor Relief: An Incidental Sideline?', in Cheyne, op. cit., pp. 115-129.

Like most teenagers he was in a rebellious stage. In his case the authority he was questioning was that of his father, who had very set ideas on a minister's duty to serve his parish first and foremost. Throughout his time as a divinity student and in his early years in parishes, Chalmers also had very definite ideas about a minister's role. As a student he had written to his father of the necessity for "order and method" in theological studies "as in any other branch of science".¹ It was that branch of science called mathematics, and not theology, that Chalmers was to give his full heart and attention in this period. Even after he was licensed this was still the case, and his brother James wrote about it with some concern to their father in September 1799.² This did not stop James Chalmers senior trying to use any influence he had to obtain a living for his son. Finally, in July 1801 Chalmers was accepted as assistant to Mr. Elliot, the minister at Cavers, and moved there in December of that year. From Cavers he wrote to his father that he found "the labours of my office sufficiently easy"³ - so much so that he had decided to apply for a mathematics assistantship to Professor Vilant at St. Andrews. He was accepted for the post and filled it for the session 1802-3, while still being assistant at Cavers. In the summer of 1803 he moved to his first parish at Kilmany in Fife, and at the same time started up three independent mathematics classes in St. Andrews, having fallen out with the Professor. He was later to add two chemistry classes. All of this compounded his father's fears of a son who did not take

1. C.P., CHA 3.1.17, 24 November 1796 T. Chalmers to his father, James Chalmers.

2. Hanna, Memoirs, 1, p. 35.

3. C.P., CHA 3.2.28, 28 April 1803, T. Chalmers to his father, James. In this letter Chalmers said his visitation of the parish took only two weeks to complete.

his vocation seriously enough.¹

Throughout all this it would appear that Chalmers was more concerned with the alternative courses he could pursue within the ministry as opposed to the intrinsic role of the minister himself. This is not to say that he intended to ignore his ministerial obligations. Rather, he considered these to be so few and undemanding, they left him five days a week to engage in other more fascinating pursuits.² Thus in the first decade of the nineteenth century his main concern was the pursuit of his much-loved subject of mathematics, and his overriding ambition was to be a professor in a university. He did not see this as contrary to a minister's duties, which he considered to consist of encouraging "humanity and justice"³ coupled with visiting and comforting the sick. He comes across as the epitome of the eighteenth century Moderate minister, intent on "enlivening" his otherwise dull uninteresting tasks.⁴ To accomplish this, he concentrated on his scientific studies and the printing of his first work in 1805, which was, aptly enough, a defence of the ability of Scottish ministers to study sciences, since, Chalmers argued, they had plenty of time on their hands to do so.

1. C.P., CHA 3.2.68, 28 April 1803, T. Chalmers to his father, James. This letter is also in Hanna, Memoirs, 1, pp. 67-8. In it, Chalmers justified the time he spent on his classes.

2. T. Chalmers, Observations on a Passage in Mr. Playfair's Letter (Cupar, 1805), p. 11.

3. Ibid., p. 12.

4. C.P., CHA 3.3.18, 3 September 1805, T. Chalmers to his brother, James (who was by then set up as a merchant in London); also in Hanna, Memoirs, 1, p. 92.

Apart from some of his sermons that were published posthumously by Hanna, Chalmers had two more published works in these years before 1810. The first one was a book on political economy in 1808, and the second was a speech before the General Assembly of 1809 on increasing ministers' stipends. The first of these gives vital insights into Chalmers' ideas on poor relief and will be considered shortly. The 1809 speech is revealing on two counts. First of all, Chalmers' general argument was that if the clergy continued to be poorly paid they would lose all respectability and independence, and so be despised. As a result, religion generally and the national church in particular would be brought into disrepute which would be disastrous for the security of the country, especially when Europe was fraught with revolution. In this context, the Church of Scotland was "a powerful instrument of security against the disaffection of the people".¹ This theme of the national church being the bulwark of the state in keeping society harmonious was to recur time and again in Chalmers' writings.² Chalmers was to carry this attitude over into his evangelical period, and it was an important aspect of his thinking on society and its smooth operation.

The second important aspect of the 1809 speech is Chalmers' reasoning in it. He described the opposition to increasing stipends from the heritors who financed them. He added that he understood

1. T. Chalmers, The Substance of a speech delivered in the General Assembly, on Thursday the 25th inst. respecting the work of the late Bill for the augmentation of stipends, to the clergy of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1809), p. 34. Hereafter Augmentation of Stipends.

2. For example, T. Chalmers, Churches and Schools for the working classes (Edinburgh, 1846), p.10.

their position and that if he himself or anyone else were a heritor they would do the same since:

When I speak of heritors it is not of individuals at all that I am speaking; it is of a certain portion of human nature transferred to that particular situation which heritors occupy; and there is as little irritation and personality in what I say, as if I were giving a dissertation upon the general laws of the human constitution, ... ¹

This tendency to segregate and analyse human emotions was to re-emerge in his later works, from 1817 onwards, and like his emphasis on the vital role of the church for a peaceful society, was to be a hallmark of his writings.

Chalmers' other published work of this pre-conversion period, was a book entitled An Enquiry into the Extent and Stability of National Resources. It was in this book that he gave his first positive statements about poor relief. As early as 1801, Chalmers' former mathematics lecturer at St. Andrews, Dr. James Brown, wrote a letter of recommendation for him stating that Chalmers was "at present with genius and ability investigating some of the difficult and interesting subjects of Philosophy and Political Economy". ² In this 1808 work Chalmers demonstrated that he had kept abreast of his political economy studies. He referred to Adam Smith a great deal, and stated his agreement with Malthus on population control as the only effective solution of poverty. An English type assessment system, he argued, simply made the problem worse by encouraging "improvidence". ³

1. T. Chalmers, Augmentation of Stipends, p. 14.

2. C.P., CHA 4.1.5, 7 December 1801, Dr. J. Brown to T. Chalmers.

3. T. Chalmers, An Enquiry into the Extent and Stability of National Resources, pp. 263-4.

Chalmers went on to assert confidently that this situation was not changed by the recent growth of industry since the basis of wealth was still the same - that is in the land. He concluded that there must be little hardship or poverty in Britain since in the past decades its population had kept pace with its food production, thus freeing the capital to invest in industries. If any particular industry collapsed, therefore, the capital would automatically be rechannelled into another industry since the total wealth based in the land had not been affected. Thus he pursued this logic to conclude that no one in Britain could not earn his keep, and there was work available for all.¹

Chalmers repeated his conclusions about the detrimental influence of an extensive legal relief system in a sermon of 1808 that is often cited. In it he concentrated on the demoralising potential of any charity and argued that if it was not strictly supervised, charity had the potential to destroy a nation by producing 'sloth and beggary and corruption'.²

Thus in this early period, Chalmers was definitely against a compulsory assessment system of relief, citing in evidence against it an automatic basic response in people to take all they could from a potentially inexhaustible source of relief thus losing their independence and self-respect. He gave intellectual authority to this stance by citing his studies in political economy, Malthus in particular. His practical experience in Kilmany most probably reinforced this since it was a small relatively prosperous

1. Ibid., pp. 27-8.

2. W. Hanna (ed.), Posthumous Works of Thomas Chalmers (Edinburgh, 1849), Sermon VI, p.60.

agricultural parish which, according to its entry in the Old Statistitcal Account, was run very much on what has been described as 'traditional' Scottish lines as regards its relief.¹

In all this, Chalmers' conclusions were similar to those of McFarlan, Cruickshank and the Edinburgh Society Against Begging referred to earlier, but for the moment he stopped there. He did not analyse this supposed basic human response to official charity, nor did he set it in a specifically philosophical or historical context as he was to do later. Rather, it was a simple statement of fact that poverty was often the result of immorality encouraged by the compulsory system itself. To state, as Hanna did, that as early as 1808 Chalmers' later poor relief theories were taking definite shape, can be very misleading. True, those later theories never contradicted the above basic assertions, but the latter were to be added to and developed into a definite philosophical system far removed from these simple assertions of fact.

The next stage in Chalmers' life was to prove very important for his later works and ideas, including his opinions on poor relief. During the years 1810 to 1812 he underwent a conversion from his intellectual, moderate concerns to a more apparently evangelical stance. The details of this change have been related before.² As a result of personal illness and the death of three close relations he entered a period of intense introspection during which he reflected on his personal failings and his attitudes towards death and towards God.³

1. S.A., vol. 19, "Kilmany", p. 431, 1798: "They very seldom and with much hesitation ask; their wants have to be noticed and supplied."

2. See Hanna, Memoirs, 1, pp. 150-233; Brown, Chalmers, pp. 49-61; Roxborough, 'op. cit.', pp. 38-56, for accounts of Chalmers' conversion.

3. C.P., CHA 6.1.3, Journal, vol. 1, 17 March 1810 to 7 December 1810.

He increasingly came to look to Christ's saving sacrifice as the only means to salvation, and acknowledged his ultimate helplessness to save himself.¹

This conversion was a radical and an exhausting one, and resulted in Chalmers diverting his energies from mathematics and chemistry to a reassessment of all his concerns on his new religious scale of priorities.² His reading of Wilberforce's Practical View of Christianity, Pascal's Pensees, and Hannah More's Practical Piety strengthened and confirmed his growing spiritual concerns. He began to form friendships with some of his evangelical neighbours, such as Dr. McCulloch, minister at Dairsie, and his daughter Janet Coutts, who was to become a life long friend and spiritual confidante. He also became friendly with Mr. Johnston, minister of the Secession Church at Rathillet. All of this resulted in Chalmers viewing the ministerial role in an entirely new light - as one of total dedication to his flock. His main desire now was to feed his own budding faith with prayer and study, and to communicate that faith to those around him, especially to his parishioners. Far from believing that two days a week were all that was needed for a minister's work, he wrote in 1811 that they could occupy "every moment of his existence", and that he was increasingly "in love" with this role.³

This different conception of his task as a minister was shown practically. He now spent far more time in Kilmany itself and involved in parochial concerns. His diary entries from March 1811

1. Ibid., 25 May 1810.

2. Ibid., 21 September 1810 - Chalmers considered ending his mathematics studies; 16 March 1811 - he revealed he had finally abandoned mathematics and intended to concentrate on divinity.

3. C.P., CHA 3.5.16, 15 July 1811, T. Chalmers to his brother, James. Also, CHA 3.5.21, 5 September 1811, Chalmers wrote to his mother to ask her to tell his father that he at last agreed with him about the all-consuming task of a minister.

onwards were full of references to his work in the parish, visiting and praying with his people. His annual visitation of each family no longer consisted of flying visits taking only a fortnight to complete, but was now extended over the whole year. Later on, a Bible study school for the young of Kilmany was established, meeting in his own home to be taught the Scriptures. In June 1812 he started an evening hour for the adults, but this was not as successful as the one for the young.¹ He encouraged his parishioners to start up the Kilmany Bible Society, as an auxiliary branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Chalmers himself now actively promoted the latter, giving sermons, writing pamphlets, and encouraging neighbouring ministers to start up branches in their own parishes.

In the process of all this increased parochial work, Chalmers came more frequently into contact with his poor parishioners. In addition, as his fame as an evangelical preacher began to grow he received an increasing number of invitations to preach for Bible and charitable societies. This acted as an incentive to him to formulate more precisely his ideas on the place of charity in the Christian's list of priorities, just as he had reformed his ideas on the ministerial role. This formulation must be set against the background of his dawning recognition of the need to elevate man's spiritual welfare above all temporal needs. The result of Chalmers' first recorded reactions to poverty after 1810 was to push it down in his scale of priorities - or rather, to place it on a low rating, since before he had not felt the need to place it on any scale of needs since he did not consider it to be an urgent question. In other words

1. Mr. Lees, the parish clerk, was in charge of setting it up - C.P., CHA 6.1.3, Journal, vol. 1, 15 June 1812; in the entry for 8 July 1812 Chalmers accused Lees of mismanaging it.

he did not at this stage embark on any intensive analysis of poverty itself which he would later simply resurrect and apply in Glasgow. Rather, poor relief was still very much a minor issue which he wanted to set into the context of his new evangelical commitment.

Evidence for Chalmers' developing ideas on poverty in the period 1810 to 1815 is to be found in his sermons, works and diaries. The sermons and printed works reveal his theories, his diaries reveal how he put those theories into practice. It will be illuminating to look at the sermons and works first,¹ and then observe their practical implementation in Kilmany. Throughout these writings there ran a common theme that man's temporal state must at all times take second place to his spiritual one. Chalmers' main aim was clear: to facilitate the spread of the Word of God through the church and missions, and to point out anything that might hinder the impact of that message. It is obvious he considered the question of poverty and its relief as falling into the latter of these categories, and he now used scriptural evidence to back up his earlier opinions on poverty which had been based upon his readings of political economy. Thus he used such texts as: 1 Timothy 5:8 'If any provide not for his own, and

1. T. Chalmers, The Two Great Instruments Appointed for the Propagation of the Gospel - a sermon before the Dundee Missionary Society on 26 October 1812 (Edinburgh, 1813), hereafter Two Great Instruments; 'Religious Intelligence - a speech at the Fife and Kinross Bible Society' printed in the Edinburgh Christian Instructor, no. 30, vol. 6. no. 1 (January 1813); The Blessedness of Considering the case of the Poor - a sermon preached before the Society for the Relief of the Destitute Sick on 18 April 1813 (Edinburgh, 1813); The Influence of Bible Societies on the Temporal Necessities of the Poor (Cupar, 1814), hereafter Influence of Bible Societies; The Evidence and Authority of the Christian Revelation (Edinburgh, 1814); The Utility of Missions Ascertained by Experience preached before the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge on 2 June 1814 (Edinburgh, 1814); On the Superior Blessedness of the Giver to the Receiver, sermon to Dunfermline Female Society. C.W., vol. 1, pp. 401-435, hereafter Giver and Receiver; The Duty of giving an Immediate Diligence to the Business of the Christian Life (Edinburgh, 1815).

specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel'; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 'If a man will not work, he shall not eat'; Psalm 41:1 'Blessed is he who considers the poor'; and Acts 20:35 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'.¹

Running through all this there was continuous reference to the futility of everything if men were not saved:

... we do not hesitate to affirm, that, it is better for the poor to be worse fed and worse clothed than that they should be left ignorant of those Scriptures, which are able to make them wise unto salvation through the faith that is in Christ Jesus.²

Another underlying theme of these works was that the most complete solution to poverty lay in making all men Christians. This was so, Chalmers argued, since then the poor would automatically leave their squalor and become self-supporting, sober and upright citizens.³ This was as clear a statement as any that poverty and weakness of character were practically synonymous to Chalmers. Poverty, therefore was a moral issue, and as such needed a moral solution. The most obvious moral solution available was the conversion to Christ and therefore to a Christian way of life.

Chalmers' more detailed statements on poverty came in his three sermons about and to charitable institutions - the Edinburgh Society for the Relief of the Destitute Sick, the Dunfermline Society, and the Dundee Orphan Hospital. He also gave important insights into his views on poverty and charity in his defence of his call to give to the missions before giving to the poor, in his 1814 work 'On the Influence of Bible Societies on the Temporal Necessities of the Poor'. In these works, he repeated his earlier assertions of 1808 that a safe, legal

1. These texts are from Influence of Bible Societies; Destitute Sick; and Giver and Receiver.

2. T. Chalmers, Influence of Bible Societies, p. 6, he expressed a similar view in Destitute Sick, p. 11.

3. T. Chalmers, Influence of Bible Societies, p. 12.

relief fund simply increased the numbers of paupers, and did not solve anything. For the first time he described such a fund as "artificial",¹ but did not go on to give any extensive analysis of what he considered to be 'natural' - that was to come much later on. For the moment he was content to say that in his scheme of things the Christian should be encouraged primarily to support the work of conversion, and secondly should exercise the Christian virtue of charity in a wise way. This meant being discriminating in his donations to charity, preferring to give to individual cases where he was sure of the need, as opposed to large public bodies which could more easily be taken in by malingerers since they had so many applications to cope with.²

There were also new elements in his approach to poverty and its relief in Chalmers' writings of these years. For example, he was beginning to assert the great potential of small donations to missionary and charitable works, which he termed "the accumulation of littles". He claimed that if every poor man gave even one penny to Bible Societies then the total collected in this way would be greater than the few large donations of the wealthy.³ Likewise, the poor could do a lot to help each other in temporary distress - clearly a better alternative to the large public funds donated by the rich which he had denounced as being pernicious in their effect. On the contrary, if neighbours helped each other in secret, as Christians should, then much would be done to effect a permanent solution to the condition of the poor.⁴ The public societies for the relief of the

1. Ibid., p. 171.

2. Ibid., e.g., pp. 27-8. It is also the entire theme of the Giver and Receiver sermon.

3. T. Chalmers, Two Great Instruments, pp. 18-20.

4. T. Chalmers, Influence of Bible Societies, and the Giver and Receiver sermons.

poor that did exist should do their utmost to scrutinise their applicants, but ultimately these societies should be abolished.¹

Thus Chalmers' ideas on this subject were developing and expanding as he encountered various charitable societies and reviewed his opinions on them in the light of his recent conversion. It can be said that his conclusions agreed with the mainstream of Scottish thinking as already set out in this chapter - the idea that poverty was essentially a moral issue, requiring a moral solution that did not entail ever-increasing infusions of monetary help, but rather the encouragement of the individual Scotsman to be frugal, honest and supportive of his neighbour. In these conclusions he was in agreement with many of the premises of Burns, Duncan and Ogilvy, but it can be seen that he was coming down on a far stricter side than Burns and Ogilvy, and his arguments had more in common with Duncan. Like those three and Macgill, it was after 1815 that he began to write more extensively and specifically on the nature of poverty itself and its solution. These years up to 1815 provided the background, but Chalmers had as yet no single solution to poverty except what was uppermost in his mind anyway - the Christian conversion of his flock. This must be borne in mind when we turn to his experiences in Glasgow.

It was his experiences in Kilmany that confirmed and contributed towards many of Chalmers' initial ideas on man's temporal state. Kilmany was a stable, relatively prosperous parish, rural in its setting, with a population of between 750 and 780 during Chalmers' incumbency.² Its expenditure on poor relief was a model example of what was termed the traditional Scottish approach, with an

1. T. Chalmers, Giver and Receiver, p. 418.

2. C.P., CHA 3.6.26, 27 April 1811, T. Chalmers to Mr. Somerville.

acknowledged expenditure of only £24 a year. The first thing that is striking when examining Chalmers' letters and diaries between 1810 and 1815 is his personal involvement in the parochial relief system (an aspect of his ideas and work on poor relief that was to change radically in Glasgow). Between March 1810 and July 1815 there were thirty-seven references in his diaries to Chalmers personally giving sessional relief, meeting the heritors to discuss poor relief, and on occasion giving his own money to beggars. These references are evidence of his theories in practice. For example, his assertion that care and discrimination should be exercised to ensure that each recipient was truly in need and morally worthy was scrupulously put into practice:

17 July 1811 - A beggar called to whom I gave one penny after much hesitation. I should not give so much in cases of uncertainty.¹

He was also convinced that the giving should be as secret as possible, even from the kirk session fund:

9 September 1811 (Chalmers had gone to Rathillet to visit the dying son of a widow, Mrs. Crichton, and had given her sessional relief) - It may be the natural ungraciousness of her manner, but I am not sure that she received it well, and you may carry your offers of money to a degree that is offensive. Better not to be too forward in these offers. It is right to keep alive delicacy and an exuberant facility² in giving may induce an improper dependence among the poor.

Thus Chalmers' parishioners were exhorted to be independent, not to rely on a regular official fund, and to expect only minimal relief. In one particular case, Chalmers also revealed his desire for friends, neighbours and relatives to be the mainstay of the poor. One of the families in his parish was having difficulty paying off a loan contracted during the famine of 1799-1800. Chalmers discovered that

1. C.P., CHA 6.1.4, Journal, vol. 2, 17 July 1811; 6.1.5, 6.1.7, Journals, vols. 3 and 4, 14 October 1811 and 17 August 1813.

2. C.P., CHA 6.1.4, Journal, vol. 2, 9 September 1811.

a prosperous landowner, William Johnson of Lathisk, was distantly related to the family. He wrote to Johnson on 25 July 1811¹ stating their position and assuring him that the family was a worthy object of his beneficence, their difficulties in no way being the result of immorality or weakness of character. Their debts amounted to £7 9s. 3½d. On 27 July Chalmers received a letter from Johnson which enclosed £7 10s. for the family.²

Chalmers maintained this method of dealing with poverty throughout the next few years in Kilmany. In the Parochial Register of the parish for 12 August 1814 it was recorded that over the past two years Chalmers had received fifteen guineas for the poor of the parish from one of its heritors, Mr. Thomson of Charleton, which Chalmers had been:

... distributing among them regularly from the session money. In this way he relieved many who felt a reluctance to a present ... and he conceives that by keeping up this principle of delicacy among those some who were on the very verge of sessional relief have been kept off from being a permanent burden on the Session. For the same reason he thought it advisable in some cases whenever the money of the Session was given away not to put down the names of the receivers in the session book but to state to the deserving and undeserving poor.³

Brown states that some of those relieved in this way were able-bodied unemployed - presumably in reference to the "undeserving poor" above.⁴ The latter was probably referring to the able-bodied beggars that figured so prominently in Chalmers' diaries. As such, it is significant that, despite the strictness of his writings on the subject, he saw no danger from relieving such if on a small basis

1. C.P., CHA 3.6.40, 25 July 1811, T. Chalmers to William Johnson.

2. St.A. U. L., MS. 30385.435, 27 July 1811, W. Johnson to T. Chalmers.

3. N.R.H., OPR 437/1, Kilmany Parochial Register (OPR 437/1), 1706-1819, 12 August 1814.

4. Brown, Chalmers, p. 80 Brown does not give his source for this assertion.

and controlled by him personally. (Though even then he often had severe doubts afterwards as to whether he should have given relief.)

Brown also points out that Chalmers met with some opposition from the heritors over his conduct of poor relief, because of this secrecy over who exactly was on relief. Chalmers mentions this opposition in his diary from 9 December 1812 onwards. The fact that the entry in the Parochial Register is dated nearly two years later, would suggest that Chalmers was stubborn in maintaining his policy. More importantly for the subject under discussion here, is the fact that Brown and others, including Chalmers, state that the average annual expenditure on relief in Kilmany was £24. The actual figures in the Kirk Session records show this to be correct if the entire period from 1804 to 1814 is taken into account. However, if the period 1811 to 1814 alone is taken, that is the years after Chalmers' conversion and during which he was writing on the subject of relief, then the average was nearly £37.¹ Even if the two voluntary donations cited above of fifteen guineas and £7 10s. are subtracted, the average was still higher - £31 3s. as opposed to £24. This could mean there was more poverty around, but it seems more likely to indicate that Chalmers did not mind being flexible in increasing relief in the rural situation since he was more assured of his personal ability to know the moral worth of his parishioners. This flexibility was to go when he encountered a city parish and faced problems on a far larger scale than any he had experienced in Kilmany. Yet he did not abandon the basic theoretical tenets that had conditioned his approach to poverty

1. St.A.U.L., MS. 37516/2, Kilmany KSR. These records stop in 1814 and do not recommence until after Chalmers had left the parish. The actual average expenditure on poor relief for these years was £36 19s. 3d.

and its relief during his Kilmany years. As has been seen, he had already demonstrated his reasoning that human nature was the same everywhere, and so it is not surprising that in the near future he was to assert that what had worked in Kilmany should and would work anywhere.

These years preceding 1815 were important in the formation of Chalmers' approach to poverty. His religious conversion was obviously of greatest importance to him but it had also forced him to examine his pastoral role and his involvement in poor relief. The end result was his agreement with his earlier assertions against a large and legal public relief system based on his intellectual studies, but now given greater, scriptural authority. He also produced some new ideas in these later Kilmany years: the need for charity to be personalised as much as possible, the ability of the poor to contribute far more than was often expected of them, and the necessity for individuals to be converted for the best possible solution of poverty to be effected. However, he was not to stop there. His Glasgow experiences were to force him to develop these ideas even further. The important thing to grasp is that on the eve of his departure to Glasgow his overriding concern was not poverty, but rather the winning of souls. It was apparent he looked on Glasgow primarily in that light - as a large wasteland to be converted.

It is interesting to note that the parish Chalmers was next to be in charge of was the Tron in Glasgow - the one that had driven Macgill to come out against a strict 'Scottish' view of poverty, and in favour of legal assessments. The nature of Chalmers' response to this parish will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: 'Let Glasgow flourish, by the preaching of the Word'.
(Glasgow city motto, nineteenth century.)

Any description of nineteenth century Glasgow revolves around one main term: expansion. The city grew geographically and demographically - between 1801 and 1901 its acreage grew from c.5,063 to 12,688, and its population from 77,058 to 761,709.¹ It also entered a world where an increasing amount of its capital and work-force were concentrated on manufacturing goods, both in small and large workshops, and in factories. The market for such goods developed as Glasgow became more accessible with a growing network of roads, canals and railways linking it to the rest of Britain and abroad as the century progressed. The centre of its industry shifted during these years, from cotton and textiles generally to iron, ship-building and engineering, although throughout there were also many smaller subsidiary industries. Such massive change naturally resulted in incredible strains on any existing material and social structures in the city. As many have pointed out, it was the speed of the transformation that produced an urban environment with a high incidence of social deprivation without even the modern day 'consolation' of being able to classify it as such. Today it is relatively simple to look back and identify the problems. The situation was bound to appear a chaotic one at the time, particularly for those living during the earlier part of that century.

1. J. Cunnison and J.B.S. Gilfillan, The Third Statistical Account, Glasgow (Glasgow, 1958), p. 54. Different authors use different specifications of the exact area covered by Glasgow and its suburbs. Cunnison and Gilfillan have kept their statistics consistent. They conclude that in 1801 the overall density of Glasgow's population was 15 persons to the acre; by 1871 this had risen to 94 persons per acre.

The origins of Glasgow's growth can be seen in the seventeenth century when it progressed from being the fifth most important trading burgh in Scotland to the second by 1705. Smout's work on Glasgow has traced this growth.¹ It was led by Glasgow's merchants who financed the expansion of many of the industries and who also held a majority in the town council. This elite was not moribund. It revolved around a group of about thirty men, the composition of which group was continuously changing. Smout argues that this in itself was the life-blood of Glasgow's success as new men with talent could work their way up the trades' and merchants' ladders.

A remarkably similar pattern is traced by Devine in his work on the Glasgow tobacco lords of the eighteenth century. Once more, the group was fairly open and showed its business acumen by developing home industries such as sugar works, tanneries, glassworks, ironworks, mines and breweries, and not relying solely on the tobacco trade. As the tobacco trade declined during the American Wars of Independence, this group was not swept away, but fell back on these home industries and on the Caribbean, European and Canadian trades. However, it did not simply transfer itself to what was to become Glasgow's new mainstay - cotton. Devine argues that the role of industrialist became separate from that of merchant by the end of the eighteenth century. The merchants themselves ceased to be dominated by the West Indian interest and the new economic elite of manufacturers was another distinct group. He adds that it was more difficult for any one of these new elites also to be a political elite since the Glasgow of 1801-15 was a far larger and more complicated city than it

1. T.C. Smout, 'The Glasgow Merchant Community in the seventeenth century', S.H.R., 47 (1968), pp. 53-71.

had been as a town of 28,300 in 1763.¹ This makes sense. However, it will become apparent in this chapter that although the concentration of political power was dissipated, it was not eliminated. For example, the great West Indian merchant families represented by James Dennistoun (1781-1834) and James Ewing (1775-1853) remained important political figures in the city - Ewing was Lord Provost as late as 1832-3. Also, the new manufacturing interests represented by Kirkman Finlay (1773-1843), Henry Monteith (1765-1848) and Robert Dalglish (1770-1844) assumed an important voice in Glasgow politics. Thus, the old usage continued to a degree, at least up to the Burgh Reform Act of 1833, and this fact was to be of great importance for Chalmers and his parochial work in the city, since he drew support from both the merchant and manufacturing groups.

At the start of the nineteenth century, the economic power of the Glasgow manufacturers was based on the cotton industry: in 1787 there were 19 cotton mills within a twenty-five mile radius of Glasgow, by 1834 there were 134.² For a time, the industry relied on both the domestic system of men and women outside the towns working in their own homes, and on the new factory system which concentrated a workforce within the towns. The latter became more dominant as the nineteenth century advanced and as increasing mechanisation of the various stages of manufacture made it more practicable.

The great increase in opportunities for work within the Glasgow

1. T.M. Devine, The Tobacco Lords (Edinburgh, 1975), p. 166; T.M. Devine, 'An eighteenth century business elite: Glasgow West Indian Merchants, c.1750-1815', S.H.R., 57 (1978), pp. 40-67.

2. D. Daiches, Glasgow (London, 1977), p.90.

area attracted many Highlanders and Irish¹, coinciding as it did with a dearth of remunerative employment for those groups in their native homes. It was to such incoming groups that Glasgow owed its demographic expansion, as opposed to any natural increase, since its death rate was often 30 - 40 per thousand between 1816-71. In each of the first five decades of the nineteenth century, the city's population increased almost 30 per cent - from c. 83,000 to 345,000.²

This raised immediate problems of providing sufficient houses, shops, schools, churches and medical facilities. Such amenities could not be foreseen in great detail since the growth that had brought about their need had been so rapid. Consequently, the authorities in Glasgow had to deal with such questions after the fact of their appearance - a time lapse which in itself created more problems as the trade crises of 1816-17, 1818, 1826, 1829 and 1837 added acute economic want to the social problems with which a significant section of the populace was already struggling. This combination of factors, along with the ever-present threat of civic unrest and disorder, lent urgency to the situation, and also made the desire for a solution all the more pressing.

Glasgow's geographic growth in these years added to its overall problems. New houses were being built in the mid-nineteenth century in the western part of the city - in such new streets as Queen Street, Buchanan Street, Dunlop Street, Miller Street, Virginia Street, Jamaica Street and Maxwell Street. The end of the century saw three

1. This influx of Highlanders and Irish was reflected in the churches of the city: three Gaelic chapels were created (Ingram Street, 1777; Duke Street, 1798; and the Gorbals Gaelic chapel, 1813), and a Catholic chapel in 1797, the congregation of which transferred to a new larger chapel in Clyde Street in 1816.

2. A. Gibb, Glasgow - the Making of the City (London, 1983), p. 105; A.K. Chalmers, The Health of Glasgow, 1818-1925 (Glasgow, 1930), p. 2.

major building projects : the Glasgow Building Company, 1786-96, which built on the lands of the Meadowflats and Ramshorn, the present George Square area; to the west, the Campbells of Blythwood feued out their estate, the main developer of it being William Harley; and, south of the Clyde, David Laurie developed land belonging to Hutcheson's Hospital and the Trade's House, and Laurieston, Tradeston and Hutchesontown emerged.¹ All these developments concentrated on the middle class housing market, and between 1780 and 1830 covered three quarters of all the building land added to Glasgow. That did not leave much for the workers in the factories and workshops. It became apparent, however, that the middle classes preferred the extreme west of the city, north of the Clyde, set apart from the bustle and noise of the central and southern industrial areas. The new buildings in the centre of Glasgow were taken over as commercial headquarters, while to the south, Lauriston and the Gorbals became increasingly working class in composition, and increasingly overcrowded, as the houses were subdivided to cram in as many as possible. The nearby burghs of Calton, Anderston and the Gorbals absorbed some of the influx of workers.² In the oldest parts of Glasgow itself - the High Street and its wynds, and the Gallowgate, Bridgegate and Saltmarket - four storey tenements, called 'back-lands', were built at the back of existing ones. Within such buildings as many families as possible were squeezed in, access to their homes being restricted to narrow

1. Descriptions of these building programmes may be found in A. Slaven, The Development of the West of Scotland, 1750-1860, pp. 147-154; Gibb, op. cit.; J.R. Kellett, 'Property Speculators and the Building of Glasgow, 1780-1830', Scottish Journal of Political Economy, 8 (1961), pp. 211-232; and F. Worsdall, The Tenement: A way of life (Glasgow, 1979).

2. These burghs were not incorporated within Glasgow's municipal boundaries until 1846.

closes and stairs. The resulting poor sanitation and ventilation was to take a great toll on the inhabitants, and was to add yet another layer to the accelerating avalanche of social problems. Chalmers' first parish in Glasgow was in the centre of this morass in the Tron.

As Slaven and Gourvish have pointed out¹, it is impossible to make a 'simple' quantitative analysis of the effects of all of this on working men. There are no reliable and continuous lists of wages and prices for this period. Gourvish tentatively concludes that there was a modest improvement for the highly paid skilled workman, but not for the unskilled labourer and handloom weaver. The very lack of statistics² is symptomatic of the problem itself, since there was not seen to be any need for such information. The amassing of data on income, prices, diets, shelter was to be left to a later age, when the first great push of expansion was over, and when the prevailing eighteenth century attitudes to the condition of man and the assumption of his autonomous role within it had become severely strained. The lack of such details makes a study of the impact of poor relief theories and their practice that much more difficult to analyse precisely. Chalmers, and many like him, saw no need to do

1. A. Slaven, op. cit., p. 155; T.R. Gourvish, 'The Cost of Living in Glasgow in the early nineteenth century', The Economic History Review, 25 (February 1972), pp. 65-80.

2. The notable exception to this was the work of one Glasgow citizen, James Cleland (1770-1840), who led the way in the field of statistics in the nineteenth century. His work affords vital information on population, poor relief and mortality, but he did not compile continuous figures on wages and prices.

such a comprehensive survey of his parish.¹ To him, and to many others, poverty and pauperism were not simple economic conditions, but were also a reflection of the moral state of the parish, city and nation. This needs very much to be borne in mind when studying his work in the Tron, and in his second Glasgow parish, St John's.

How then did the Glasgow system of poor relief operate, and how did it cope with these problems? The nineteenth century organisation of relief in the city had its origins in the preceding century. Two complementary systems had evolved revolving around the General Session of the eight city parishes, and the Town's Hospital, erected in 1733. Before then, the General Session, on behalf of the town council and magistrates, had looked after the general poor, with the Trades' and Merchants' Houses having pension-type schemes for their members. As Glasgow expanded the increasing incidence of begging from 'strangers' in the city, and the consequent strain on the existing resources, had resulted in consultations between the four major public bodies concerned. In anticipation of such a meeting, information was sought on various expedients to cope with vagrancy and relief generally. The Rev. J. MacLaurin published a pamphlet on workhouses that was to be adopted officially on 4th, January, 1732.² Three main concerns were apparent in this pamphlet: to decrease the public nuisance of begging;

1. W.P. Alison, Observations on the Management of the Poor in Scotland (Edinburgh, 1840), pp. 42-3, called on Chalmers to do just that, but in The Sufficiency of a parochial system without a Poor Rate, for the Right Management of the Poor, (C.W.), vol. 21, p. 238, Chalmers replied he saw no need to supply information on food, housing and clothing to prove that poverty had been overcome in his parish.

2. J. MacLaurin, The Case of the Poor Consider'd (Glasgow, 1729), see above, p. 5; also G.T.H. M., 27 January 1732.

to ensure that the real poor, as opposed to "counterfiets" received help;¹ and to minimise the cost of that help.

As a result of these developments the Town's Hospital was built in 1733 - a place of refuge for the aged, widows and orphans, and where all who could work were encouraged to do whatever they were able to contribute to their upkeep. The Hospital was run by forty-eight directors - twelve from each of the four bodies - who met quarterly. A weekly committee of eight (two from each of the four) managed the routine business of the establishment. The funds consisted of donations from each of the four bodies, it being understood that if these ever fell short of its expenditure, a legal assessment would come into force.² Relief on the parish level was left intact. The General Session still acted as a central clearing house for the collections of the eight parishes, redistributing them according to the numbers of paupers on their respective rolls. By 1795 it was established practice that an individual or family had first to have received the highest pension its kirk session awarded, and this to have proved inadequate, before he could go on to the Hospital funds. Once a case had been referred by an elder to the Town's Hospital, the kirk session ceased to provide any parochial aid. Thus, in Glasgow, the church dealt directly with only the least serious cases of poverty. The major portion of official poor relief in the city was under the control of several groups of citizens, and to that extent it was a fairly complicated system of relief.

The success of the Town's Hospital in achieving its original aims was apparently very limited. As the eighteenth century progressed, the emphasis in MacLaurin's pamphlet on the necessity to scrutinise the poor increased. Fears grew that the former 'safe' class of

1. MacLaurin, op. cit., p. 1.

2. G.T.H.M., 3 January 1744.



virtuous poor was being lost amidst a growing city population, leaving the well-off a prey to the impositions of "Dissolute Irregular and Disorderly persons".¹ In 1773 an assessment was levied for the first time, to balance the Hospital's expenditure. In 1782 the Rev. W. Porteous was appointed 'Guardian of the rights of the poor who are entitled to the Charity of the City of Glasgow'. The next year he produced a booklet on the management of poor relief. In this he demonstrated clearly the underlying philosophy of poor relief which was to become so apparent in the next century:

If the poor have a certain and a liberal provision made by the public, we may bid farewell to industry and frugality among that class of men; - nothing will be laid up in the days of health, for the name of sickness, and the infirmities of old age; no provision will be made for children, however destitute they may be left.²

This shows the beginnings of a shift in emphasis away from the simple definitions of good and bad poor, and from the idea that poverty could easily be relieved if somehow the vicious poor could be isolated from the rest. The theory that the method of poor relief itself could be a main cause of vice and poverty had obviously entered Glasgow, as was happening in other parts of Scotland at that time. Having said that, Porteous was not in favour of any 'natural' system of relief operating chiefly from individual benefactors' compassion and sympathy.³ On the contrary, he wanted to see in Glasgow a rational, systematic cataloguing of all poor receiving relief from the sessions, Town's Hospital and private charities. Lists of such poor would be drawn up and all charitable bodies would have access to them, thus diminishing the risk of fraud by individual claimants.

1. Ibid.

2. Porteous, A Letter to the citizens of Glasgow (Glasgow, 1783), p. 1.

3. Ibid., p. 2, Porteous did recognise the place of man's natural response in the operation of charity, but argued that civic laws and religion were also necessary to tackle the problem effectively.

Porteous also allowed the claim of the able-bodied labourer who did not earn enough to keep himself and his family - such a person should have his income supplemented by charity.¹ As yet, such claims were apparently not so numerous as to constitute a serious threat.

By the 1790's the inadequacy of the official system of relief was borne out by the existence of over ninety private friendly societies in Glasgow, the author of the Old Statistical Account for Glasgow stating that this was the best way to cope with poverty since it did not encourage "the idle or the profligate", each society checking its applications.² In addition the voluntary church door collections received by the General Session were increasingly inadequate for even the limited amount of relief the individual sessions were supposed to profer. During the 1801 famine, the General Session was unable to pay its part of the contribution by the four public bodies to the upkeep of the Town's Hospital. On the contrary, over the next eighteen years it had to ask the Hospital for money simply to keep abreast of the sessional poor - loans that ranged from £300 to £1500.³

Throughout the eighteenth century descriptions of relief in Glasgow there had been a degree of confidence expressed, implying that any problems that existed were temporary and soluble. This was to diminish as the nineteenth century opened. Crop failures in 1799 and 1800 resulted in a general public subscription to buy grain for the populace. This measure was initiated by the town council and magistrates, leaving them with a debt of £15,000 as prices fell again and they were left with grain on hand.⁴ Just as the Town's

1. Ibid., p. 2.

2. S.A., vol. 5, "Glasgow", p. 526 (1793).

3. See below, p. 122.

4. J. Cleland, Annals of Glasgow, comprising an Account of the Public buildings, Charities, and the Rise and Progress of the City (Glasgow, 1816), vol. 1, p. 40. Hereafter Annals.

Hospital had in many ways taken over where the church could not cope earlier, in the eighteenth century, so the council was increasingly involved in extraordinary measures for relief as the Town's Hospital's resources were stretched to their limit in the early nineteenth century.¹

The increasing strain on the funds of the Hospital was again apparent in the increasing necessity to appoint more paid officers to conduct a rigorous check of applicants, and to ensure that only the worthy poor were admitted.² The forty-eight directors were apparently growing lax in carrying out their duty of visiting the Hospital as the numbers it was dealing with grew increasingly unwieldy.³ There were also attempts at improvements within the system itself. Four paid surgeons were appointed by the Hospital to care for the sick amongst the poor. The insane were moved out of the Hospital to a separate Asylum in 1814. The directors also decided to move out of the 1733 building, which was cramped, damp and cold, and bought a site in Spring Gardens, north of the cathedral, for a new hospital.

Part of the strain on the Hospital funds came from the still very

1. G.T.H.M., 19 February, 30 April, 21 May 1801, 19 November 1801 - all these meetings record the problems of finance during the crisis of that year. Such crises were to recur in the next twenty years as trade fluctuations hit the city. This stress was also apparent in the increase of the assessment on the city's inhabitants: J. Cleland, Statistical and Population tables relative to the City of Glasgow (Glasgow, 1828), p.127 - in 1782 the assessment was £1,057; this remained steady until 1790; in 1795 it rose to £3,387; 1801, £7,180; 1802, £7,955. It fell to £3,940 in 1803, but rose dramatically during times of crisis, so that between 1809 and 1820 it rose from £5,770 to £13,225, : G.B.R., 28 October 1809 and 28 April 1820.

2. G.T.H.M., 16 February 1815 and 15 March 1816, a vice-Preceptor and a supervisor/overseer were appointed. The latter was to procure a list of poor from all sources (Dissenters, Trade Associations, voluntary societies and kirk sessions). He was paid £100 a year. According to Cleland, The Rise and Progress of the City of Glasgow (Glasgow, 1829), p. 150, this measure was successful in stopping many receiving from the Hospital.

3. G.T.H.M., 20 February 1817, it was decided that from then on the names of those directors who did not visit would be read out at meetings, but not cited in the minutes.

obvious nuisance of 'strangers' in the city, who had no legal residence, and so resorted to begging or to making false claims which were difficult to follow up as the population increased and the situation grew more and more complicated. This can be seen in the two main Glasgow newspapers of the time - the Glasgow Courier and the Glasgow Chronicle. Stories circulated of Irishmen and women coming over specifically to beg from the charitable Glasgow inhabitants. These stories were presented as a warning to people to be on their guard.¹ The strengthening of police powers to imprison and exile such beggars apparently did not solve the problem, as the stories about such people continued to be repeated. There were also examples in the press of men and women faking destitution to receive relief, and abandoning children to be cared for by the Town's Hospital.² One of the results of such cases was that the Hospital decided to take legal proceedings against the fathers of illegitimate children.³ Thus mistrust was building up over poor relief proceedings generally in Glasgow, and again it is necessary to see Chalmers' activities in the city against this background.

Various expedients arose to fill the obvious gap between those relieved from the public official sources of Hospital and General Session, and the increasing numbers still unrelieved. The high incidence of begging and the concern and mistrust that had built up

1. Glasgow Courier, 10 December 1814.

2. For example Glasgow Courier, 28 June 1814, reported that on the death of a beggar in Chester he had been found to be very wealthy; 25 October 1814, a man from Dunfermline had pretended to have been sick and applied for and been given relief in Glasgow, only later was it discovered his illness had been faked; there were also cases of children being abandoned: 5 April 1815, 20 February 1817 and 8 September 1818.

3. G.T.H.M., 16 June 1815.

over discriminating between the deserving poor and the dissolute was a sign of the existing system simply not coping with this growing conglomeration of people. Till the early nineteenth century it had been assumed that if those two were under control, then poverty would take care of itself. The obvious difficulties of containing them, and also the growing financial burden of those admitted to relief, led to an increase in the number of private charities and friendly societies. These dealt with an overflow of poverty that was soon to be greater than that relieved by the church and Hospital combined. According to James Cleland (1770 - 1840), Superintendent of Public Works in Glasgow from September 1814, there were one hundred and twenty-nine friendly societies in the city by 1816.¹ These, plus such institutions as Hutcheson's Hospital, the Magdalene Asylum, the Provident Bank, and savings banks, were to attempt to fill the gap in providing for periods of personal ill-health and of general trade depression. In addition, the nineteen dissenting congregations in Glasgow were distributing money to their own poor. Cleland concluded that of his estimated £104,360 given in all types of charity in the city in a year, less than one-eighth was from the official relief system.²

Despite the evidence of these difficulties regarding relief in Glasgow, there seems to have been few who questioned the status quo on the eve of Chalmers' arrival.³ The situation was to worsen in the next few years as economic depression after the Napoleonic Wars hit the city. The response to that crisis by the city authorities was

1. J. Cleland, Abridged Annals (Glasgow, 1817), pp. 244-9.

2. J. Cleland, Annals (Glasgow, 1816), vol. 1, pp. 270-4.

3. Glasgow Courier, 10 December 1814, the Magistrates placed an advertisement against begging and referred to "the ample provision made for the maintenance of the poor of this city legally entitled to support ...".

once more confused as the practical situation, as opposed to any theories on poor relief, dictated their responses in the form of public subscriptions and public works to help the unemployed.¹ In order to gain an understanding of their response and of Chalmers' place in it, it will be necessary to examine the details of his appointment to the busy inner city parish of the Tron. This will give an insight into the personnel of those making decisions in Glasgow in the period 1815-19, and will also elucidate the reasons for Chalmers' influence in and impact upon the city.

This then was the scene in Glasgow when Chalmers arrived there in 1815. The prelude to his election as minister of the Tron is significant in itself, and highlights many important aspects of those vying for economic and political control within the city. The eight city parishes were under the patronage of the Town Council, and so it was the latter who would come to decide on a minister for the vacant Tron parish. From a survey of the Council records it would appear that such an election was not usually an occasion for any great fuss within the Council. This was not to be the case with the 1814 Tron election. Various pressure groups arose to press the case for and against Chalmers, and in studying these a revealing light is shed upon the operation of Glasgow politics at the time.

First of all, it is necessary to examine the set of the burgh of Glasgow. The town council and magistrates consisted of thirty-three men: a Lord Provost, three Merchant Baillies, two Trades Baillies, a Treasurer, a Master of Works, the Dean of Guild and Deacon's Convenor, twelve merchant councillors and eleven trades' councillors.

1. Indeed, during 1811 there was an extraordinary assessment for the able-bodied unemployed, the "unemployed industrious poor", G.B.R., 8 February 1811.

'Elections' to the council were annual, but voting was confined to the council itself, who elected the Provost and Baillies, and the two preceding sets of magistrates elected two new merchant and two new trades' councillors to replace the four most senior members of those respective groups.¹ The council even elected the Deacon Convenor and Dean of Guild - from lists of three people nominated by the Merchants' and Trades' Houses respectively. Thus, like most Scottish burghs, the council was self-elected and could be self-perpetuating if it so chose.²

The fact that the Glasgow town council was in practice confined to a relatively small coterie is confirmed by a study of the personnel on the council over the ten years that flanked Chalmers' stay in the city, 1814 - 1824. During that time, seventy-four men shared the thirty-three positions in the council. For seven of those years, 1814 - 1821, only sixty-three men held the thirty-three posts on the council, fourteen or 22.2% of whom were also in the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce during that time. Most of these sixty-three were also evident in a random selection of public bodies in the city, including the management of charitable societies, donations and emergency measures for relief in times of epidemic and economic depression, committees and petitions in support of the commercial interest of the city, political declarations of loyalty, and attempts to improve the

1. Cleland, *Annals* (Glasgow, 1816), vol. 1, pp. 40 ff.; Act of Council Anent the Set of the Burgh of Glasgow, confirmed by the general convention of the Royal Burghs (Glasgow, 22 October 1811, in the G.U.L., SP. Coll. 2490).

2. There was opposition to this dating back to the eighteenth century mainly from the Trades Incorporations, e.g., G.B.R., Renwick's introduction, p. 158: in February 1785 the Trades houses sent the Lord Provost a paper with plans for reforms of "'the present abuses in the government of the royal burghs of Scotland'", and called for changes in the management of the city's property and revenues.

amenities of the city.¹ This reveals a significant degree of concentration of economic and political power. Much more intensive studies of such data needs to be done and would constitute an important thesis in itself.

From the brief study done in connection with this thesis

1. Of the 63 who were on the council from 1814 to 1821, nine served for one year, seven for two years, six for three years, eight for four years, ten for five years, eleven for six years, six for seven years, three for eight years, and three for ten years. These 63 were also active in this period on the Boards of Directors of the Glasgow Stirlingshire Charitable Socety, the Glasgow Lunatic Asylum, the Town's Hospital, the Society for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb, and the Glasgow Provident Bank (aimed at encouraging the working classes to save). Fourteen were members of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, twelve of the Trades and Magistrates Club. Forty-three participated in various emergency poor relief and fever measures between 1814 and 1821, and thirty-one took part in a range of committees and petitions aimed at safeguarding their commercial interests: Glasgow Courier - 13, 18 and 25 January, 26 February, 3, 8, 15 and 29 March, 19 April, 13 October 1814; 7, 19, 28 January, 2, 3, 11, 16 and 18 March, 22 June,, 8 July, 23 September, 12 October 1815; 11 and 16 January, 3 February, 10 October, 23 November, 14 December 1816; 9,11 and 14 January, 8 February, 27 March, 5 June, 30 September, 4 October 1817; 10, 22, 27 January, 9 April, 18 and 25 July, 15 October, 19 December 1818; 14, 19, January, 2 and 4 February, 9 and 11 March, 3 April, 14 October, 21 and 28 December 1819; 8 and 20 January, 8 and 13 April, 6 May, 12 October 1820; The Glasgow Directory: Containing a list of the Merchant Manufacturers, Traders, in the City and Suburbs (Glasgow, 1821, 1822, 1823).

tentative conclusions can be drawn with regard to a widening of the commercial base of the city. As Devine points out, no longer was it the case that a relatively small number of merchants held the reins of trade and industry. As the economic base of the city widened, specialisation took over and more men were able to make considerable fortunes out of the different aspects of the manufacturing process. Not all such men could be on the town council, but there is evidence of pressure group politics developing which attempted to force the council to embrace these widening groups and their interests. Such attempts were not always successful. The repeated pressure from the trades incorporations for reform of the council itself was a case in point.¹ There was, however, the possibility of success on some issues which did not threaten the core of the council's particular power. Chalmers' election was such an issue.

Stevenson Macgill notified Glasgow town council on 29 September 1814 of his resignation from the Tron to take up the Chair of Divinity at Glasgow University. It was before this, in early September, that the move to procure the up-and-coming Fife Evangelical preacher, Thomas Chalmers, was set afoot.² The canvass for Chalmers appears to have originated with the Tennent brothers, John (d. 1827) and Robert (d. 1825), sons of Hugh Tennent, a maltman in Glasgow who established a brewery in the Drygate. Robert was an elder

1. See, p. 58, n. 2 above. This gathered force again from 1817, e.g. Report of the Proceeding of the Committees appointed by the Incorporations ... in Glasgow, to carry into effect their several Resolutions regarding an Alteration in the Set of that burgh. (Glasgow, 1818).

2. Hanna, Memoirs, 1, pp. 436-7.

in St George's kirk session from 1811¹, and both he and his brother were keen supporters of the Evangelicals in the Church of Scotland. In September John wrote to a merchant friend, David Pitcairn of Leith, asking for his support for the plan of 'my friends' to bring Chalmers to Glasgow.² Neither of the Tennents were on the 1814 town council that was to conduct the election, but they set to work soliciting help for those who were on it for their cause.³ For example, they encouraged some of the leading Edinburgh clergy to write letters commending Chalmers, which letters they intended to circulate among their Glasgow friends.⁴

In the run up to the election, a second pressure group outside the council backed up the Tennents. Chalmers' cousins, John and Walter Wood, merchants in Glasgow and both Dissenters, were also keen to have their evangelical kinsman in their midst. John Wood wrote to Chalmers on 28 October 1814 introducing four "friends and admirers of yours" - Joshua Heywood, Robert Hood (an elder in the Burgher church), Ebenezer Richardson, and William Rodger.⁵ These four were on the town council and went all the way to Perth to hear for themselves Chalmers preach, after apparently having been shown the testimonies that the Tennent brothers had distributed. These testimonies seem also to have influenced another councillor, John More, and his support

1. S.R.O., CH2/818.3, St. George's KSR: Robert Tennent was admitted as an elder in 1811, but resigned in 1816 - there is evidence he attended the Tron church once Chalmers was established in it. Robert was also a brother-in-law of Henry Paul, who was active as an elder in St. John's under Chalmers.

2. Hanna, Memoirs, 1, p. 437.

3. Robert was on the town council from 1815 to 1819, i.e. he did have influence in the city, he had also been on the council before 1815, e.g. 1807.

4. Hanna, Memoirs, 1, p. 437, e.g. Dr. Thomas Fleming (1754-1824), of Lady Yester's parish, Edinburgh.

5. C.P., CHA 4.3.74, 28 October 1814, John Wood to T. Chalmers.

for Chalmers was also counted upon by the others.¹ Three more supporters on the council are known. Charles S. Parker, a merchant and the Tennent's brother-in-law, was encouraged by one of the Glasgow ministers, Dr. Balfour of St. Paul's parish, to take up Chalmers' cause because he would be a good pastor.² Archibald Newbigging, a calico manufacturer and active in various charitable and religious societies was also keen to bring Chalmers to Glasgow.³ The third one was James Dennistoun (1758-1834) - he was perhaps Chalmers' most powerful proponent on the council. An eminent Glasgow merchant and financier, he was also involved in various charitable societies.

The overriding concern of this group of twelve wealthy, respected citizens, was a religious one. They wanted a minister who would preach the Gospel, and saw themselves as acting in this election as the "Friends of religion"⁴, whose main aim was "... the ardent desire of bringing into Glasgow a minister who would preach the doctrines of the gospel in their native energy and simplicity."⁵ This agitation at the council level was added to by a grass-roots assertion of the necessity to elect Chalmers. The Tron church congregation itself, used to a conscientious and active minister in Macgill, sent the town

1. Hanna, Memoirs, 1, p. 437.

2. Ibid., These three - John and Hugh Tennent, and Charles Stuart Parker their son-in-law, had villas at Fairlie, in Largs. Chalmers visited them there even after he left Glasgow, and Parker's and Chalmers' children became very friendly with each other.

3. Archibald Newbigging was closely involved with the Glasgow Auxiliary Bible Society, British and Foreign Bible Society, Committee for Boys, Glasgow Lunatic Asylum, and the Lancastrian School Society.

4. C.P., CHA 4.3.60, 25 November 1814, Robert Tennent to T. Chalmers.

5. Hanna, Memoirs, 1, p. 441.

council a petition with two hundred and forty-five signatures, asking for Chalmers to be elected since they wanted a minister of "piety, zeal and talent" to replace the Evangelical Macgill.¹ Among the signatories were John Smith (1753-1833), the Glasgow publisher, and William Collins (1789-1853) then a teacher in the Tron area. Collins was a member of the Tron kirk session, Smith one of the Tron hearers. It would seem that even this move had been instigated by one of the council pressure groups, since John Smith later wrote that it was a member of the council who had called on him and suggested a subscription paper to back up Chalmers' case, and Smith was also often visited by John Wood to discuss the candidacy.²

That all this collaboration was considered necessary was the result of Chalmers' hitherto rather shaky reputation. His dramatic change from being a 'safe', solid Moderate to one of the 'wild men' of the Evangelicals did not fit in with the image Glasgow officials had been carefully cultivating for their city in the first decades of the century. A far more traditional, establishment-type figure presented himself in the form of Dr. Duncan MacFarlane (1771-1857), and it was he whom the majority of the council favoured to begin with. This included the Provost and the M.P. for the Glasgow burghs, Henry Monteith and Kirkman Finlay respectively.³ They alone, with their personal influence, represented a formidable opposition to the pro-Chalmers faction.

On 25 November 1814, at 2 p.m., the town council and magistrates met. On the agenda that day was the Tron election. The atmosphere was tense. The news room of the city chambers was crowded

1. G.B.R., 28 November 1814

2. C.P., CHA 5.4.253, Smith's 'History of Thomas Chalmers' Arrival in Glasgow', pp. 1-2.

3. C.P., CHA 4.3.75, 24 November 1815, J. Wood to T. Chalmers.

with people impatient to know the result.¹ The intrigue that had taken place in the previous weeks between the opposing groups had even included one of the Chalmers' faction, Baillie Hood, being offered a bribe by a West Indian House to cast his vote against Chalmers.² When the result was made known there was great rejoicing in the city amidst Dissenters and Evangelicals - Chalmers had received fifteen votes, MacFarlan ten, and a Dr McLean four (two did not vote). Of the twelve known influential supporters listed above³, only eight were on the 1814-15 council - Heywood, Hood, Richardson, Rodger, Newbigging, Parker, Dennistoun and More. Therefore this group had managed to win over seven more votes. Unfortunately it is not known who these seven were, but the picture is clear. A pressure group did establish itself - in this case with the common short-term aim of the promotion of a particular religious conviction - and managed to pass through the council what had originally been considered an undesirable and unpopular measure.⁴ Similarly, when Chalmers himself was to present his alternative plan for poor relief in St. John's it was largely due to his influence with leading Glasgow business men and councillors that he was allowed to proceed, as will be seen in chapter three.

Thus the 1814 election reveals two things. First, how those with economic standing in the Glasgow community, both inside and outside the town council, were able to organise themselves to exert pressure on the council. This perhaps marks the initiation of middle class

1. C.P., CHA 4.3.60, 25 November 1814, R. Tennent to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.3.67, 29 November 1814, Isabella Turpie (cousin of Chalmers' mother), to T. Chalmers. S. Brown, Chalmers, p. 92, wrongly says it was John Wood, a cooper, who was bribed. Wood was Chalmers' cousin - it was Hood who was a cooper and who was referred to in this letter.

3. See below, Appendix I, pp. 412-4.

4. G.B.R., 11 February 1819, Newbigging and Parker again used their influence on the council to promote the candidacy of an Evangelical, James Marshall, for the Outer High parish.

pressure group politics later to be used so effectively at a national level in the Anti-Corn Law League. In addition, it shows the increasing strength and commitment of the Evangelical laity in the Church of Scotland in Glasgow. This was to be important in the evolution of general ecclesiastical polity within the established church over the next few decades.

As a result of all the interest in the election, the Tron church was packed out on Sunday, 23 July 1815, when Chalmers preached his first sermon as its parish minister. He preached for one and a quarter hours - though one observer said it seemed like only one quarter of an hour, he spoke so well.¹ Likewise, on Chalmers' first weekday sermon that Thursday, the church was again full. There had been a run on the seats in the Tron during the intervening months between the election and Chalmers' arrival. On the occasion of the weekday sermon, it was not only the Church of Scotland members that occupied the pews, but also Seceders, Antiburghers, Independents and Methodists.²

The existence of this obviously very receptive group to the dedicated type of ministry Chalmers wanted to carry out, might lead one to suspect that Glasgow was a haven for evangelicals in nineteenth century Scotland, and that Chalmers would spend his time there very fruitfully with this ready-made core of supporters and potential helpers. Yet ironically, despite the great build-up to the election itself, Chalmers personally was far from sure whether he

1. C.P., CHA 5.2, 28 July 1815, J. Smith to son J. Smith the youngest.

2. C.P., CHA 4.3.67, 29 November 1814, I. Turpie to T. Chalmers, the beadle told I. Turpie that he could have let the seats twice over and at any rate he chose. Also, CHA 5.2, 25 July 1815, J. Smith to son J. Smith, he commented that there were many dissenters present on Thursday 27 September 1815.

would accept the charge even if it were offered to him. Between 26 September and 10 December 1814, there were twenty references to the Glasgow position in his diary, and in fifteen of those he expressed doubts, depression and pious invocations over the decision. The impression from reading the diary over these months is one of a minister reluctant to part with the flock he had come to know so well, and which had seen him through his conversion period.¹ There were also practical considerations since the stipend was not very large, although he was annoyed with himself for letting such thoughts cloud his decision-making.²

As the election itself approached, the most pressing consideration in Chalmers' letters and diary against accepting the Tron, appears to have been his worry over the extra tasks expected of ministers of city parishes. He wrote to Dr. Balfour of St. Paul's and to Robert Tennent asking about those duties. Tennent replied on 30 November 1814, assuring Chalmers that at the very most two hours daily would be enough. Dr. Balfour's letter of 7 December was more detailed. He outlined the various charities and institutions in which the ministers of the city took it in turns to officiate - for example, Hutcheson's Hospital, Millar's and Wilson's charity schools, the Town's Hospital directorate, as well as the normal parish work of referring the poor of the parish to the Hospital. He added that such tasks were not necessarily time-consuming. Finally Balfour tactfully suggested to Chalmers that perhaps Chalmers' mind, so elevated first by science and now by religion "cannot easily descend to inferior attentions and pursuits", and yet we should fill "our place here" and

1. For example C.P., CHA 6.1. 8, Journal, vol 5, 21 and 22 November 1814.

2. Ibid, 26 September 1814, 15 January 1815.

accept such duties. This must have convinced Chalmers, always so intent in his diaries of checking any tendencies to consider himself superior to others. He also looked on Balfour as a "Christian father" whose advice he valued.¹ Thus, on 10 December 1814 Chalmers recorded in his diary that he had received Balfour's letter and had decided to accept the Tron.²

Chalmers had obviously considered what he would actually do if such tasks did in fact become too burdensome. He wrote to Robert Tennent on 21 November 1814 saying he would try "to get all the work shifted upon the laymen", and Robert Tennent replied on 12 December that Chalmers could always follow the example of Dr. Porteous who gave up all such extra-parochial work for a number of years since essentially it was voluntary, and the ministers of the city could not be forced to carry it out. However, Chalmers as yet gave no indication of any detailed scheme for lay help such as creating an order of deacons to cope with the secular side of poor relief. He also gave no more thought to developing a specific theory on poverty in anticipation of his impending work in a city parish. All that was to come later, once he was actually in the city. His chief aim for the moment, like that of the people who had made his transferral to Glasgow possible, was the 'conversion of souls' and the edification and strengthening of his parishioners. He was convinced that it was for that purpose that Providence had called him to Glasgow.³ What would await him on his arrival in the Tron?

1. Hanna, Memoirs, 1, pp. 444-445, 21 November 1814, T. Chalmers to R. Tennent, in which Chalmers wrote he did not want to be made a "church warden"; C.P., CHA 4.3.7, 7 December 1814, R. Balfour to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 6.1.8, Journal, vol. 5, 10 December 1814.

3. Hanna, Memoirs, 1, pp. 442-6; C.P., CHA 4.3.64, 12 December 1814, R. Tennent to T. Chalmers.

On 26 December 1814, the Tron Kirk Session, which consisted of only eight elders, sent a letter to tell Chalmers how pleased they and all the congregation were by his election. The letter concluded with an assurance of prayers to God:

... that you may enjoy much of his countenance and support in the discharge of your ministry ...¹

Chalmers replied to this on 2 January 1815, thanking them and adding his own prayers to theirs. He moved to the Tron in July of that year, having spent the intervening months preparing his Kilmany flock and visiting Glasgow. Within a short time of his arrival in the city, however, all the rejoicing and jubilation of the election period had died down. It was replaced by a bitterness on Chalmers' side, and, I suspect, some confusion and pain on the part of his friends and supporters. Chalmers' diary of June to December 1815 reveals the reason. Hitherto very scrupulous in keeping his journal, the number of entries decreased during this period, and those he did record convey a vivid impression of his fears concerning the secularization of a city minister's office having been realised. Fatigue and frustration at the pressure on his time, the large number of varying tasks and people he was being daily confronted with, and the concomitant lack of time to fulfil his high expectations of reaping a great spiritual harvest in the Tron come across very vividly. Thus he wrote on 24 November 1815:

God give me wisdom, and save me from being enraged at the annoyances of the poor.²

It is now time to examine more closely the actual parish of the

1. C.P., CHA 5.2.1, 26 December 1814, address from the Tron kirk session to T. Chalmers. The session members were Andrew Hunter, William Collins, William Ferguson, John McCulloch, John Mitchell, Alexander McVicar, James Rae and Robert Tod.

2. C.P., CHA 6.1.8, Journal, vol. 5, 24 November 1815.

Tron to gain a clearer picture of just why Chalmers had reached such a depth of frustration over it. It is also necessary to analyse his practical reactions once the initial anger he felt had died down. These will form the topics of the final section of this chapter.

The Tron parish was an exceptionally large one. Chalmers estimated its population at just over eleven thousand after his visitation of it, which itself took over two years to complete. (From 27 November 1815 to the end of 1817.)¹ Even although the parish church, situated on the south side of the Trongate, was the largest one in Glasgow with seats for 1,277, there was obviously a huge proportion of the parish who physically could not attend. When it is remembered that the fashionable and wealthy middle classes from all over Glasgow were the ones who had snapped up its seats when Chalmers' election had been announced², then it becomes apparent that the number of actual parishioners in the congregation must have been minimal. During his visitation of the parish, Chalmers conducted a religious survey of its inhabitants, and found, to his horror, that of the 1,934 families for whom he was able to establish information, 43.3% had seats in Dissenting places of worship, 25.6% in an Established Church of Scotland, and 28.5% had no seats anywhere.³ Bearing in mind that these figures could have been even smaller since Chalmers was unable to ascertain the situation of 445 families, the picture is clear. The Tron parish was in no way similar to Kilmany

1. C.P., CHA 5.1.31, Diary of his visitation of the parish and a 'Record of Parish Duties'.

2. C.P., CHA 4.3.67, 29 November 1814, I. Turpie to T. Chalmers, " ... some of the most genteel people in Glasgow have taken seats as far back as we are and are glad to get them." C.P., CHA 4.3.5, 28 November 1814, R. Balfour to T. Chalmers, Balfour wrote that Macgill had not drawn many hearers, but all seats in the Tron had been let by 28 November 1814, only three days after Chalmers' election had been announced.

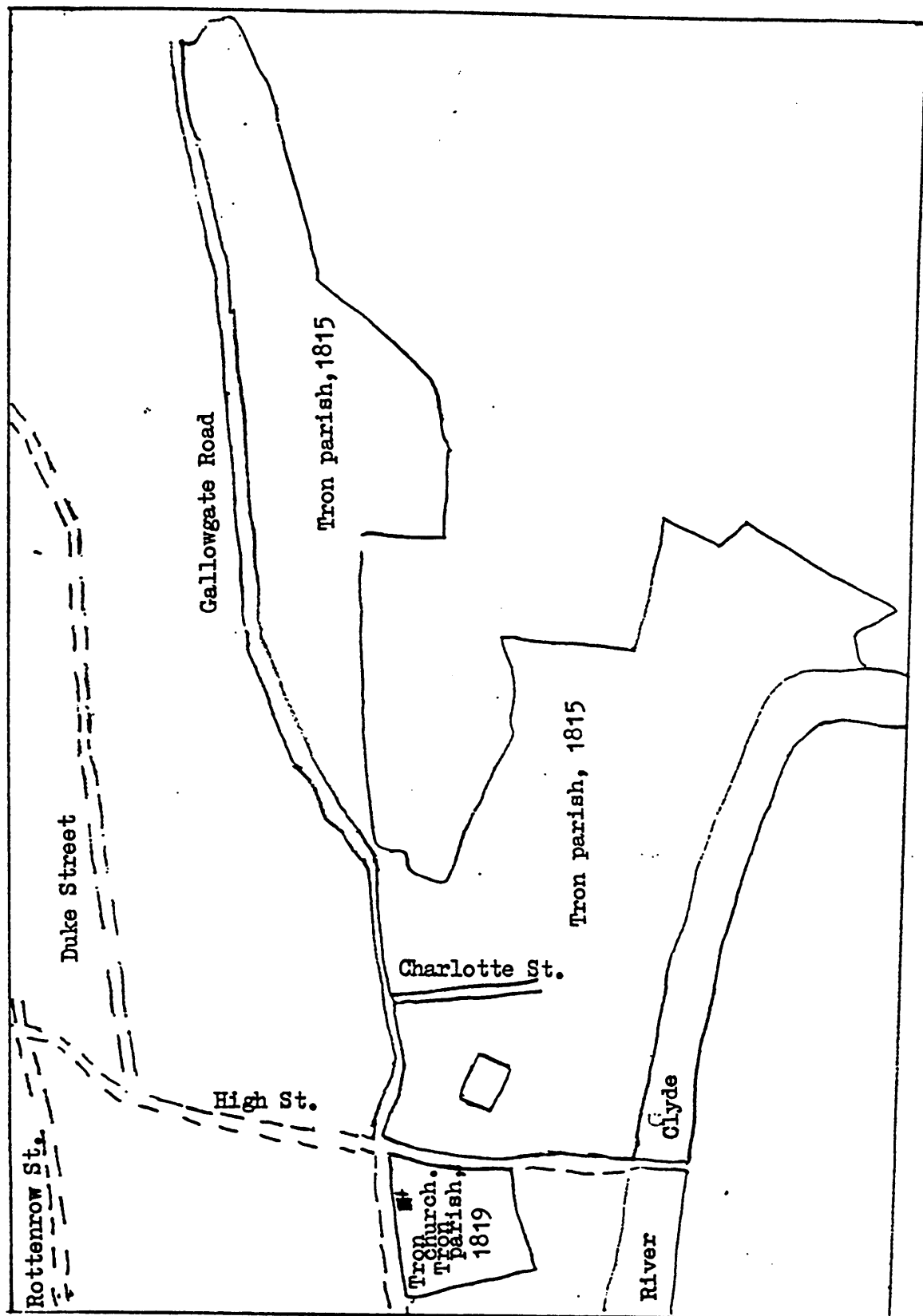
3. C.P., CHA 5.1.31, 'Record of Parish Duties'.

with its small population and its parochial congregation. It must have been galling for Chalmers to think he had come to convert a parish, the vast majority of whom were not present in his Sunday congregation. The distinction between congregation and parish was made brutally clear to him in the Tron, and was to have a great impact on his subsequent thinking and writing on the necessity for the Church of Scotland somehow to redress the balance. The immediate task ahead seemed enormous.

As well as the numerical scale of the problem, the large geographical extent of the parish and its acute poverty in many areas had to be dealt with. In 1819, with the creation of the new parish of St. John's in the city, and later, in 1820 of St James, the Tron parish was radically altered to embrace a far smaller area and a population of 7,117.¹ In 1815, however, it extended not only over the Trongate area itself, but also eastwards to the Gallowgate and south-east over St. Andrew's Square and Great Hamilton Street. (See map, page 71). As had already been indicated, this area of Glasgow in the eighteenth century had become crowded with people as large numbers of tanworks, barkmills and dyeworks opened up alongside the Molendinar and Gallowgate burns. The resulting overcrowding intensified in the nineteenth century as large numbers came into Glasgow looking for work, and as the textile industry became increasingly concentrated on the eastern side of the city.²

1. J. Cleland, Description of the Ten Parishes into which the City of Glasgow was Divided, in the year 1820 and a Description of the Twenty-Four Police Wards (Glasgow, 1820). Hereafter, Description.

2. A. Gibb, op. cit., pp. 78, 106. By 1819 46.28% of the Tron parish population were migrants - the highest percentage in the city parishes. In 1815, the Tron also had the second highest number of paupers on its funds - 209: from Cleland, Annals (Glasgow, 1816), vol. 2, pp. 227-8.



Tron Parish, Glasgow: 1815, 1819.¹

1. Based on S.R.A., A2/1/3, p. 186, 18 February 1820; S.R.O., RHP 433, Map of the Barony Parish and Royalty of Glasgow, 1822, by James Cleland.

From the start, the overall impression from Chalmers' diary and letters makes one realise he was unhappy in this new situation. Hanna described his first year in Glasgow as one of unease at the many demands on his time for civil as well as religious duties - for example, signing forms for licenses to sell spirits, certificates to peddlars, decisions with regard to the daily running of the Town's Hospital and other public bodies. However, the almost frenzied anger with which Chalmers regarded all these is not so vivid in Hanna as a full reading of the diaries and letters themselves conveys. It is essential to remember this when examining his first two years in the Tron and the various ways in which he sought to give himself the time for such pursuits. That is, even yet his main aim was not to relieve, eradicate or even examine the extent of poverty or pauperism in the Tron or elsewhere in Glasgow. True he was annoyed by the extent to which a minister was involved in the administration of relief in the city, but initially at any rate this was part and parcel of his general disquiet with the conditions of a minister in a city like Glasgow. Thus he noted in his diary of 24 November 1815 the statement quoted above about the annoyances of the poor. In the same way his entries in his diary, often so meticulous and soul-searching in Kilmany, became increasingly briefer and scantier as he was no longer able to be master over his own time.¹ His letters to friends, and especially to former acquaintances in Kilmany bear repeated testimony

1. C.P., CHA 6.1.8, Journal, vol. 5, from the 23rd July to the 8th December 1815 the entries were very brief and there are a few gaps. There were even more gaps in 1816, the final entry being on the 23rd June 1816. Just before that, on 3 June 1816 Chalmers gave vent to his feelings, "Irritable violence at dinner invitations and the whole tribe of Glasgow annoyances. O my God forgive and cleanse." Unfortunately, the next diary is missing. The next surviving one begins on 17 March 1821, CHA 6.1.9. Most of 1821 has been cut out, however, and it does not resume until 1 January 1822.

to this frustration with his Glasgow situation.¹

These annoyances and demands on his time even invaded his private life. Initially Chalmers did not stay in the Tron parish itself. When he arrived in Glasgow on 20 July 1815 his cousin Mr. John Wood took him to lodgings in the Rottenrow which he had found for Chalmers. Rottenrow was situated south-west of the Cathedral (see map, page 71), and had ready access to the open countryside (one of Glasgow's first reservoirs was built there in 1816 by the Glasgow Water Works Company). Chalmers himself thought the situation similar to Kilmany in its pure air.² On 16 September he moved into the Tron parish itself, with his wife and daughter, to a house in Charlotte Street - a street that Gibb describes as having opened in 1779 and at this time was still a relatively well-off one with middle class residents. It was easier for Chalmers to visit his parish from there, but once he was settled into his house with his family it appeared that even more of the respectable classes expected to be able to call on him and have their calls returned. At the beginning of 1816 Chalmers wrote to his sister Jane Morton, and described the Charlotte Street house as being very spacious, there being plenty room for its household of Chalmers' immediate family, his brother Charles, two boarders (both American, William Laird and George Scriba), and three servants.³ Despite this more congenial domestic setting, he was now in the centre of Glasgow, and was more aware of its smoky atmosphere, especially in the winter.

1. For example, C.P., CHA 3.12.11, 30 August 1815, T. Chalmers to David Gillespie of Mountquhanay, Cupar (an Episcopalian heritor with whom Chalmers was friendly in Kilmany); CHA 3.7.37, 23 October 1815, T. Chalmers to Dr. Charles Stuart (1745-1826), a former Church of Scotland minister of Cramond, who became an Anabaptist, and with whom Chalmers was friendly; CHA 3.7.50, 3 July 1816, T. Chalmers to his mother.

2. Hanna, Memoirs, 2, p. 5.

3. Ibid., 2, p. 224, 5 January 1816, T. Chalmers to Jane Morton.

It was then that he started to go out of Glasgow to the " 'pure country houses'" of his middle class friends to recover from the city's weakening effects.¹ Such villas were to offer a continual retreat to Chalmers, who was always sensitive about his health, and this intensified his friendship with the owners. In particular, Robert Tennent and Charles Stuart Parker, both of whom had houses at Fairlie near Largs were to remain life-long friends and their homes were oases of peace for Chalmers even after he had left Glasgow's polluted atmosphere. In addition, Chalmers tried to spend some of each summer in Fife while he was attached to the city, and again looked on such trips as necessary balm for his soul and spirits.

All of this reinforces the image of Chalmers' malaise in Glasgow. These excursions formed one 'escape' from his situation there. He also had a number of positive solutions. His first practical reaction was to make his mornings sacred. He refused to receive anyone till after noon. He also reduced his own visits to friends and acquaintances to "one dinner and two teas a week".² As has been said, however, the pressure on him to make the social rounds increased after September when he moved to a permanent house. Over the next year his diary shows him conducting his visitation of the parish, noting thirty-nine families with sick or aged members whom he should visit regularly, examining and admitting one hundred and five new communicants, as well as conducting numerous baptisms.³ The rest of his time was spent variously. For example, visiting members of the

1. *Ibid.*, 2, p. 24.

2. *Ibid.*, 2, p. 11; C.P., CHA 6.1.8, Journal, vol. 5, 21 August 1815.

3. C.P., CHA 5.1.31, 'Record of Parish Duties': 1) November 1815 to October 1816, first part of his visitation of the parish. 2) November 1815 - 24 new communicants, April 1816 - 38 new communicants, November 1816 - 43 new communicants. 3) Between July and December 1815 there were 101 baptisms.

Glasgow 'elite' such as the Woods, William Rodger and Robert Tennent who had brought him to the Tron. In addition, he also visited leading members of his congregation, some of whom were elders, or were shortly to become elders - for example, a Mr. Tod, the Smith family, Mr. Urquhart, Mr. McVicar and Mr. Mitchell.

In his first months in the Tron Chalmers also formed what was to be a vital friendship with James Ewing. Ewing's father was a West Indian merchant whose business Ewing succeeded to in 1814. He was active on the town council and was on it continuously from 1815 to 1822, as well as being chairman of the Chamber of Commerce from 1818 to 1820. Ewing went on to become Lord Provost of the city in 1822, and M.P. for Glasgow from 1832 to 1834. He was also active on such charitable bodies as the Lunatic Asylum and the Town's Hospital, and on his death was to leave £70,000 to asylums and charities in Glasgow.¹ All these positions and his overall influence in the city were to be vital in enabling Chalmers to establish his social experiment in St. John's.

The other factor in a clergyman's life that Chalmers recognised as being important - that is, over and above the time and space to study and think - was time to compose his sermons. Chalmers was particularly successful in this in his early years in the Tron. Indeed his reputation as a preacher was finally established throughout Scotland and England in 1816 when he gave a series of week-day sermons in the Tron church, which were later to be published as the The Astronomical Discourses. The aim of these sermons was to reconcile science and religion. Chalmers wanted to show that an Evangelical minister was just as learned and au fait with current theories as the

1. The first reference to Ewing is in C.P., CHA 6.1.8, Journal, vol. 5, 28 October 1815, "Drank tea in Mr Ewing's."; J. K. McDowall, The People's History of Glasgow (Glasgow, 1899), p. 100.

intellectual Moderates of old, and was not necessarily the wild, zealous, narrow-minded man of popular imagery. He was also keen to show the growing middle classes in the towns - the group he had so far been in the most direct contact with - that they could be successful in commercial pursuits and scientific study without neglecting the Christian message. These sermons were certainly successful in attracting this group in that the Tron church was packed out on each of the week-days he preached, with men leaving their businesses to come and listen. Chalmers published these sermons in January 1817, and they made him considerable sums of money, as they sold nearly 20,000 copies in their first year.¹ This volume was also to extend his fame into England, and he began to be sought after to preach south of the border as well as in his native Scotland.

Thus by December 1816, Chalmers had made a significant impact on Glasgow, and his popularity apparently justified the earlier exertions to bring him to the city. In his actual parish, however, he was still encumbered by the numerous secular duties of his office. He had only eight elders from Macgill's session to assist him, and their duties were apparently confined to serving at the communion tables.² His first practical step towards enlisting more help within the parish was taken in the course of 1816 when he started to look around for more elders. In the process he asked William Rodger to consider becoming a member of the Tron kirk session. Rodger had helped in the 1814 election, and since Chalmers' arrival had been a member of the congregation and had continued in friendship with him. Rodger apparently refused, however - his name is on no surviving lists of

1. C.P., CHA, 3.8.9, 28 March 1817, T. Chalmers to his mother - by that date he had made £1,000; CHA 3.2.23, 19 September 1817, T. Chalmers to his mother - by then it was £1,600.

2. Hanna, Memoirs, 2, p. 121.

Tron elders¹ - but as an active member of the congregation he was still very helpful towards Chalmers.

Chalmers also approached John Smith the publisher and bookseller - with more success this time.² In addition to Smith, eleven other men were enlisted and ordained by Chalmers. It has proved difficult to establish precise information on this now twenty strong body of elders.³ Twelve of them⁴ went on to serve the St. John's kirk session, and so it would appear that the majority of them were more attached to Chalmers personally and his work, than to the Tron parish itself. Smith and Collins made their names independently as publishers, and Collins also as a temperance reformer. One other, John Graham, was a town councillor from 1817 to 1821. Of the other seventeen, two were manufacturers (John McCulloch and Patrick Falconer), and one was a lawyer (Matthew Montogomerie). The occupations of the other thirteen are unknown. Although, as a body, this revitalised Tron session was obviously not drawn from the Glasgow elite, as described at the start of this chapter, it seems probable

1. C.P., CHA 3.7.54, 16 August 1816, T. Chalmers to William Rodger, asking him to consider being an elder. The lists of actual elders can be obtained by combining three sources: C.P., CHA 5.2.1, 26 December 1814, The Tron Kirk Session address to T. Chalmers; CHA 5.1.31, Chalmers' visitation notes; and S.R.O., KSR St. John's, Glasgow, 3 June 1819, gives lists of those elders who moved from the Tron to St. John's.

2. C.P., CHA 5.4.253, Smith's history of Chalmers' arrival in Glasgow.

3. The 20 Tron elders compiled from the sources in footnote 1 above, were: Andrew Hunter, William Ferguson, John Mitchell, Robert Tod, Joseph Bain, (?) McFarlane, George Buchanan, (?) Cullen, John McCulloch, Alexander McVicar, James Rae, William Collins, Patrick Falconer, John Smith, Robert Brown, John Wilson, Robert Neilson, John Graham, John Kirkland, John Brown and Matthew Montogomerie. S. Brown, Chalmers, p. 101, Brown says that Robert Tennent was one of twelve new elders ordained in December 1816. This is a mistake. Brown took his list of elders from an 1817 committee for a subscription for an assistant, a committee which included elders and hearers.

4. The last twelve underlined above accompanied Chalmers to St. John's on 3 June 1819; John McCulloch followed on 24 October 1819, S.R.O., CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR.

that the rest of the session were likewise from the solid, respectable middle classes.

In addition to helping Chalmers with his visitation of the parish, it would appear that in the second half of 1816 he had delegated to the elders those secular tasks he had repeatedly railed against throughout the preceding year. Thus on 26 December 1816 he wrote to his friend the Rev. Dr. Samuel Charters of Wilton, Hawick that his health had improved in the last few months due to having "shaken away ... that load of secular duties", and again, his former boarder, George Scriba, wrote to him from New York saying he hoped that the increase in elders would have removed many such burdens from Chalmers that Scriba had witnessed at first hand when he stayed with him.¹

What Chalmers himself expected of these elders is apparent in his sermon in December 1816 at the ordination of the latest recruits. He outlined three requirements of an elder. First, in his personal life he should be an example to all in his discipleship to Jesus. Secondly, in his parochial work he should visit all in his district and pray with them, in particular giving spiritual comfort to the sick and dying. Lastly, he should be cautious but kind in his administration of poor relief to the needy, and if possible should try anything - including using his own business position to find work for an individual - to stop the poor enlisting on a public fund. This last injunction was identical to Chalmers' approach to poor relief in Kilmany, as noted in chapter one. Yet, in Kilmany he had considered this was also a part of the minister's duties. Thus, in practical terms, Chalmers' experiences in the Tron so far had made him come to

1. C.P., CHA 3.12.9, 26 December 1816, T. Chalmers to Dr. S. Charters; CHA 4.6.46, 15 November 1817, G. Scriba to T. Chalmers.

the conclusion that a minister in a town parish should not personally be involved in poor relief. Indeed, he argued that ideally the office of deacon should deal with poor relief, not even the elders being involved, although he gave no indication he intended to appoint deacons. Thus poor relief was a duty that should be delegated, both to safeguard the minister's sorely pressed timetable in the city, and, Chalmers had come to believe, it was better for the poor and for his parishioners generally if that were the case.¹

During the first part of his parochial visitation, between November 1815 and October 1816, Chalmers had been asked by one hundred and thirty families about their situation as regards relief, and was disgusted by this tainting of his office, afraid that any welcome he received was only due to his potential material help, and not for spiritual comfort. Accordingly, he disassociated himself from the whole process. After October he no longer mentioned the poor nor their demands in his personal records of visitation, but left that to his elders.²

Thus, it looked as though the first major crisis of Chalmers' experiences of city life and a city parish had eventually been overcome. Yet apparently some of the Tron congregation were dissatisfied with Chalmers' December sermon and his generally negative attitude so far to his role in Glasgow.³ Chalmers' reaction to this situation revealed the statesman in him. It also helps to explain some of the instances of disharmony in his relations with those he

1. Hanna, Memoirs, 2, Appendix F, pp. 507-12. Deacons had existed in the early church, were revived by Calvin in Geneva, and were part of the ecclesiastical structure set out in the Second Book of Discipline.

2. C.P., CHA 5.1.31, 'Record of Parish Duties'.

3. For example, an undated letter from J. Smith to T. Chalmers, C.P., CHA 5.3.122, "Occasioned by the Opposition to Dr. Chalmers' sermon on his Secular Duties."

worked with - despite Hanna's picture of almost universal accord and of Chalmer's overall charisma. In this case, Chalmers used the timely offer of a ministerial charge in Stirling to swing the general consensus of his congregation back once more to supporting him wholeheartedly having been shaken by the threat of losing him. It would be wrong to suggest Chalmers was in no way genuinely interested in the Stirling offer. His contact with Stirling originated as far back as 15 March 1816, when William Anderson, a Stirling merchant who knew John Smith the youngest (1784-1849) wrote to the latter and referred to the Provost having asked Chalmers' advice on various ministers in relation to a vacant charge in Stirling.¹ In November Anderson again wrote to Smith asking him to invite Chalmers to preach in Stirling. Smith replied in the negative for Chalmers.² Then, on 29 January 1817 - in the wake of Chalmers' public avowal of discontent and the opposition of some of the congregation - Anderson again wrote to Smith asking if he thought Chalmers would accept a charge in Stirling which was then vacant.³ By 12 February 1817, Chalmers himself had been in touch with the Stirling town council to ask how large the parish was and how much extra-ministerial work it entailed.⁴ He also asked whether it could be arranged, if he did accept, that

1. C.P., CHA 5.3.93, 15 March 1816, W. Anderson to J. Smith, youngest.

2. C.P., CHA 5.3.127, November 1816, W. Anderson to J. Smith youngest; CHA 5.3.154, 28 November 1816, J. Smith to W. Anderson.

3. C.P., CHA 5.3.154, 29 November 1817, W. Anderson to J. Smith. Chalmers was also approached concerning the Abbey Church at Paisley and an Edinburgh parish: CHA 5.13.158, January/February 1817, countess of Glasgow to J. Smith; CHA 5.3.160, 4 February 1817, J. Smith to countess of Glasgow, draft letter.

4. C.P., CHA 4.6.29, 12 February 1817, T. Littlejohn to T. Chalmers. Littlejohn said he had put Chalmers' questions to the town council and was writing to give the replies.

none of the poor would go to his house to "trouble" him. The reply described a parish of 6,000 where the minister could be freed from all temporal tasks, leaving him ample time for his own literary pursuits - a veritable Canaan compared to the Egypt of Glasgow.¹

Chalmers was understandably tempted by this Stirling offer of a far smaller parish where the terms of his ministry would be clear from the start and not have to be fought for. The reaction of his Tron congregation, however, seems to have put new life into him. First of all, on 12 February 1817, one hundred and thirty-six members of the congregation drew up three addresses to Chalmers giving him their unqualified approval as their minister. One hundred and twenty-six also pledged their financial support for Chalmers to appoint an assistant minister to help him in his spiritual oversight of the actual parish, as opposed to the congregation. A committee of twenty men was formed on the same day to supervise the fund. Once more, some of Chalmers' influential supporters were to the fore - C.S. Parker, Ebenezer Richardson, Robert Tennent and William Rodger. There were eight other congregational members of this committee, and eight elders. The one hundred and twenty-six members pledged a total of £173 4s. 0d. - the individual subscriptions ranged from half a guinea to two guineas annually.²

After all these efforts on his behalf, Chalmers did not keep them in suspense for long. On 17 February he wrote to John Smith and, in

1. Ibid.

2. C.P., CHA 5.1.5, 12 February 1817, Address from Members of the Tron Church, Glasgow; Additions to the above Address, 12 February 1817; and letter to Chalmers, 17 February 1817. Four of Chalmers' 1814 supporters signed the address and each personally subscribed two guineas annually for an assistant: William Rodger, C.S. Parker, R. Tennent and Ebenezer Richardson.

more detail to William Rodger, informing them that he had turned down the Stirling offer. To the latter he wrote very warmly, thanking him for his help, and, as chairman of the committee of subscribers, informing him that he accepted the offer of an assistant.¹ Thus it came about that Thomas Blyth (? - 1844) came to the Tron as its first official assistant on 1 July 1817. He was paid £150 a year - £25 every two months - and the assistantship itself was only to last for as long as Chalmers was in the Tron.² Like Chalmers, Blyth was from Fife, and was probably known to him from his Kilmany days, when Blyth was a student at St. Andrews. Chalmers did make two references in his diary to a Mr. Blyth coming to visit him.³ He appears to have done well in the Tron. Chalmers talked of his "piety and modesty and useful services" in the parish generally and with the sick and dying in particular.⁴ Blyth did not like Glasgow itself very much, but grew to enjoy his work there, and was grateful to Chalmers for his kindness to him.⁵ He left in November 1818 in anticipation of Chalmers' departure to St. John's.

During this period, Chalmers received two other addresses from groups in his parish, protesting their complete faith in his ministry and supporting his stand on secular duties. One was from the Tron Sabbath School Society, the other from a group of female parishioners.⁶

1. C.P., CHA 5.3.168, 17 February 1817, T. Chalmers to J. Smith: CHA 3.8.3, 17 February 1817, 3.8.5, 18 February 1817, T. Chalmers to W. Rodger.

2. The assistantship was duly wound up on 17 November 1818, in anticipation of Chalmers' going to St. John's, C.P., CHA 5.4.69, Resolution by the Committee of Subscribers to the fund for an assistant to the Rev. Dr. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 6.1.8, Journal, vol. 5, 24 April 1815 and 30 June 1815.

4. C.P., CHA 3.8.59, 12 October 1818, T. Chalmers to W. Rodger.

5. St. A.U.L., MS 30385.114, 3 May 1819, T. Blyth to T. Chalmers.

6. C.P., CHA 5.2.7, n.d., and 5.2.9, 15 February 1817.

According to Hanna, the former society originated in October 1816 and was led by William Collins, then still a teacher in the Tron. The schools were aimed at children, and in the first year of their existence grew rapidly.¹ The teachers met monthly, and by February 1817 there were ten of them in all, including one of John Smith's sons (John Smith the youngest), and David Stow (later to become famous as an early propounder of modern educational theories). Their message echoed the support of the general address, and cited their own increasing strength as proof of the spiritual growth of the parish under Chalmers' ministrations. The address from the female parishioners was signed by thirty-eight individuals, but these were drawn from only nineteen families (many mothers and daughters signed). They were led by Mrs. Matthew Montgomerie, wife of the lawyer elder who was to follow Chalmers to St. John's. She did state that if they had had more time more names would have been added. This address is interesting as a pointer to the growing activity of women within the church, and also as a precursor of the Victorian female city philanthropists, since some of its signatories went on to help Chalmers practically in St. John's.²

Thus Chalmers' faith in his calling and his congregation was restored by all of these protestations of loyalty and usefulness. Over the next year he still complained of Glasgow in his correspondence, but not nearly so vehemently. On 12 October 1818, he wrote to William Rodger thanking him and the committee for an assistant for all they had done for him over the past twenty months. Their practical help had enabled him "to take country excursions"

1. Hanna, Memoirs, 2, p. 122: by the end of 1818, 1,200 children attended the various schools.

2. For example, Mrs. M. Montgomerie, Misses Cowan, and Miss Naismith.

which had helped his health, and, more particularly,

... by exempting me from the fatigues and exertions of a constant attendance upon the duties of the Tron Church you have preserved my mind in far fitter state for such efforts and such preparations as I have been enabled to come forward with.¹

What, then, was the product of this 'free' time for Chalmers and the preparations he referred to? The answer lies in his printed works in this period. It is now necessary to study these works, and to see where exactly these experiences and encounters with Glasgow city life had led him in his thoughts on poor relief during these important years.

1. C.P., CHA 3.8.59, 12 October 1818, T. Chalmers to W. Rodger.

CHAPTER THREE: Chalmers' Appointment to St. John's -
"Vice escapes in the crowd."¹

In the first section of this chapter Chalmers' theories on poverty and poor relief as they developed between 1816 and 1819 will be discussed. One main point which is useful to establish before embarking on an analysis of those ideas, is Chalmers' theological position at this time as regards the fallen nature of man. In his sermons and discourses throughout the years, Chalmers reiterated a basic belief in human depravity and in man's total inability to rise out of this sinful state without Christ.² Yet his poor relief theories during this period came to have a decided emphasis on fundamental laws of human nature which included inherent natural tendencies for all men, Christian and non-Christian alike, to help their fellow men. It will be seen that these were not in fact contradictory positions in Chalmers' mind, but to understand them one must be aware of both the theological and moral world views Chalmers held at the time.

Significantly, the first printed work Chalmers was to produce in Glasgow once given more leisure time by his congregation's provision of an assistant, was also his first article specifically on poverty. It appeared in the March 1817 edition of the Edinburgh Review, and was entitled "Connexion between the Extension of the Church and the Extinction of Pauperism." It came in the middle of an economic

1. R. Burns, Historical Dissertations on the Law and Practice of Great Britain, and particularly of Scotland, with regard to the Poor (Edinburgh, 1819), p. 59.

2. T. Chalmers, Sermons Preached in the Tron Church Glasgow (Glasgow, 1819), hereafter Sermons Preached in the Tron Church; and Commercial Discourses, C.W., vol. 6 (Edinburgh, 1852).

depression in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars and the consequent dislocation of industries. In this situation, Chalmers' earlier attestations of loyalty to the state and his belief in the church providing the Government's best ally against revolution came to the fore once more.

Contemporary accounts of Glasgow during these years, 1815 to 1818, emphasise the growing poverty of the city's population. For example, the Glasgow Courier of 29 June 1816 reported on the current "universal stagnation of trade" which had hit Glasgow in particular.¹

The Glasgow Chronicle of the same date printed a letter describing the depression and the "consequent misery" of many labourers, especially weavers and winders.² Suggestions for the relief of the families of such workers were abundant. They ranged from persuading the poor to subsist on herrings at only 2d. a pound, to offering work to the unemployed on the Glasgow to Carlisle road which was being built with the aid of a government grant and subscriptions from the Glasgow business community.³ The town council itself decided something would have to be done for:

... the relief of the industrious poor or of those individuals of the labouring classes of the community who, in the present circumstances of the country, cannot procure work at all, or only at such low rates of wages as are inadequate to the support of themselves and their families.⁴

So much for the traditional Scottish approach to poor relief. The practicalities of the situation meant something had to be done for the

1. Glasgow Courier, 29 June 1816.

2. Glasgow Chronicle, 29 June 1816.

3. Ibid., 24 August 1816 and 15 August 1816; and Glasgow Courier, 24 August 1816.

4. G.B.R., 27 June 1816.

able-bodied unemployed if disaster of some sort was to be avoided. In this case the council arranged with the Town's Hospital for extraordinary aid to such poor from the remains of the 1811 extraordinary assessment for the relief of "unemployed industrious poor".¹ The council also adopted other expedients - for example, itself employing labourers to work on Glasgow Green and the quarry. Throughout, the council made it clear that such extraordinary relief was not a legal right of the unemployed, but for the moment that was not really the point. In December 1816 a public subscription was also opened in Glasgow and raised £9,079.² The desire not to give such a subscription to any able-bodied unemployed was apparent. For example, in January 1817 the committee in charge of it appealed for any who could to give work to unemployed labourers. However, in the end, the pressure and scale of want proved to be too great for such measures.

There were also riots and disturbances in Glasgow and its suburbs during these years. Suspicions and panic were rampant, fed by reports of unrest in Manchester, Birmingham and London. Hence the farcical case of Richmond the spy working for Kirkman Finlay, Glasgow's M.P. at that time. Although Finlay's use of Richmond was unproductive in procuring the prosecution of any leaders of 'sedition', there is evidence of such unrest among sections of Glasgow's population. Roach has demonstrated that there was indeed a conspiracy with a treasonable oath, and the fears of the Glasgow merchant and business classes were not unfounded.³ In the Tron parish itself a mob broke the windows of the cotton mill of Pollock, Gilmour and Co. in Tureen Street in August

1. Ibid., 8 February 1811.

2. J. Cleland, Enumeration of the Inhabitants of Glasgow (Glasgow, 1820), p. 33.

3. W.M. Roach, 'Alexander Richmond and the Radical Reform Movements in Glasgow', S.H.R., 51 (1972), pp. 1-19.

1816. Special constables were enrolled in April 1817 and issued with small batons.¹

By 1818 the economic recession had abated, only to be replaced by a typhus epidemic. The number of typhus cases doubled from 382 to 715 between 1816 and 1817, and in the year 1818 to 1819 the number rose to 1,929.² A Society for the Suppression of Fever was formed in March 1818, and appointed a committee to supervise any measures against the epidemic. By April 1818 a branch of that committee sat daily in Hutcheson's Hospital and all new cases of fever were channelled through it so that a strict control could be kept over cleaning and fumigating houses of the victims.³ The Royal Infirmary quickly became overcrowded, and a Fever Hospital was set up in Spring Gardens with two hundred beds. It was soon obvious that those hardest hit by the fever lived in areas of the city which were overcrowded and dirty. A massive clean-up operation was launched to burn bedding and fumigate homes of the afflicted. A proclamation was also issued by the Fever Committee, magistrates and Dean of Guild ordering the cleaning out of dunghills in the closes and also of pig-sties.⁴ This was a classic case of nineteenth century intervention with compulsory measures for a crisis situation, despite a general attitude that on the whole there should be as little state and civic interference as possible in an individual's life. The measures in Glasgow were immediately dropped once it was considered that the worst was over. This was by no means unique to Glasgow, rather towns and cities throughout Britain adopted

1. G.B.R., 16 June 1816, 14 April 1817.

2. J. Cleland, The Rise and Progress of the City of Glasgow, pp. 105-6.

3. Glasgow Courier, 9 April 1818.

4. Ibid., 21 April 1818; G.B.R., 14 February 1820, recorded prosecutions against 200 individuals who failed to comply.

similar procedures even during the graver cholera epidemics of the 1830's, and then withdrew any such emergency measure once the current outbreak was under control. It was a vacillation between laissez-faire principles and the necessity for intervention in particular situations.¹ The immediate concern of the citizens of Glasgow in the 1818 crisis was also expressed by raising a voluntary subscription for those of the labouring class in particular who were the worst hit by the fever. It raised a total of £6,226.

Chalmers' first recorded opinions on the initial wave of industrial failures after 1815, the demands for political reform and the abolition of the Corn Laws, were aimed at the owners of industries as opposed to the workers themselves. He expressed them in January 1816 in a sermon entitled "Thoughts on Universal Peace", which was later printed. In this sermon he repeated his 1808 sentiments of patriotism, and in support of the Tory government he eulogised the current rulers in Britain in their actions abolishing the slave trade and to convert India. He concluded it was "the most enlightened government in the world acting as the organ of its most moral and intelligent population." All the more reprehensible, therefore, was the "factious, turbulent, unquenchable, ... spirit of political disaffection." All the more necessary was Christianity, he argued.²

The main theme of this sermon was the ideal of an everlasting peace, which could only be attained once the last days had come, since it needed total commitment and surrender to Christianity by all. As

1. A. Briggs, The Age of Improvement (London, 1959), pp. 33-4; A. Briggs, Victorian Cities (Harmondsworth, p.b., 1968), pp. 375-6; R.J. Morris, Cholera, 1832 (London, 1976).

2. T. Chalmers, Thoughts on Universal Peace, C.W., vol. 11, pp 71-2, 69.

regards the current industrial problems he proffered a far more immediate solution. Again he reiterated an idea of 1808: industry should be subservient to the overall needs of the country. Just as it should be used in times of war to provide war materials, so now the war was over, it should be happy to stand back and regard the present readjustment of trade as a small price to pay for peace, however temporary it might prove to be. If individuals become bankrupt as a result, then they should simply trust in God. Cold comfort perhaps for the Glasgow traders and manufacturers concerned.

Chalmers' sympathies for the plight of the labouring classes were equally limited. On 15 July 1816 he went to Fife for a six weeks holiday. On 31 July he wrote to Robert Tennent that the economic crisis had been exaggerated, and repeated a similar statement to one he had first made in his book of 1808:

I am convinced, that while the equable distribution of comfort is a little out of order at present, there is a full average of comforts amongst the labouring classes at large; and even in those places where there is a deficiency, it is greatly overrated ... I do not deny the pressure that is in Glasgow, but my every impression is that it is more bawled and bustled and belaboured about, both in print and in conversation, than it ought to be.¹

Such a view was probably strengthened by the evidence of a petition in 1816 to Lord Sidmouth in the Home Office from some operative weavers

1. See above, p. 32 ; Hanna, Memoirs, 2, p. 77. And yet four days before this, on 29 July 1816, Chalmers had written to John Smith the youngest asking to be kept fully informed of the condition of the Glasgow operatives and to be told " ... if there be any prospect of a speedy issue to the present embarrassments". Chalmers went on to say that if there was a poor harvest and consequently high food prices at the same time as "the present distressed state of the manufacturers" then it would be impossible to calculate as to the extent of suffering that might come.", C.P., CHA 5.3.116. Perhaps the different, more compassionate tone of this letter was due to its pastoral nature, to a fellow parish worker. In the first letter to Robert Tennent Chalmers was speaking more theoretically.

in Kirkcaldy, a copy of which was found in Chalmers' papers. In this statement the weavers presented a picture of themselves accepting and conforming to the 'traditional' Scottish attitude towards poor relief, but added that their request for aid was the result of an extraordinarily bad situation:

Accustomed to live by our industry we shrink at the idea of being fed by the hand of charity, having from our infancy been led to consider those who depended for support on parochial supply as the most unfortunate of our fellow creatures.¹

The weavers also stated that before taking this step of petitioning they had first appealed to the manufacturers themselves for some sort of financial help, but had met with no response. All this was to give ammunition to Chalmers for his first work on poverty in March 1817. It is now necessary to look at this article and see how Chalmers' theories on poverty and its relief had developed since his arrival in Glasgow.

In his first article specifically on poor relief, Chalmers stated it to be his aim "to reduce the heavy expenses of pauperism, and, at the same time, to relieve the miseries of the poor."² He was to repeat this aim in all his subsequent works on the poor question, and it is vital to realise this if his actions in this field are to be properly evaluated. That is, poverty would be relieved as well as official expenditure on it being reduced and indeed being finally removed, as the title of this particular article claimed. Yet the

1. C.P., CHA 4.6.3, 1816: To the Right honourable Lord Viscount Sidmouth, His majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department: from Links, Kirkcaldy, the operative weavers employed in the manufacture of kick and check in Kirkcaldy, Linkstown, Pathead and Dysart.

2. T. Chalmers, Connexion between the Extension of the Church and the Extinction of Pauperism, C.W., vol. 20, p. 252. Hereafter Extinction of Pauperism.

emphasis in that article and in subsequent works was always on the extinction of pauperism as opposed to the relief of poverty itself. It would seem that in Chalmers' mind the two did become confused, despite his initial assertion of two individual aims. One task of this thesis will be to determine whether Chalmers ever did offer adequate proof that his ideas and methods did indeed result in less poverty as well as in less pauperism.

In the review article of 1817 he asserted from the beginning his continued adherence to Malthus' arguments against a public provision of relief for the poor.¹ Unlike his sermons in the years 1810 to 1814, Chalmers was not intent on simply giving scriptural authority for this assertion - the review was obviously for a different audience than these sermons had been aimed at. Despite his avowed toryism, Chalmers was friendly with the new young Whigs, Francis Jeffrey and Henry Cockburn, and perhaps saw their literary vehicle of the Edinburgh Review as a means of reaching a wider audience which was collectively holding increasingly influential positions and therefore might be in a position to promote his ideas. For the moment, however, he thought it prudent to withhold his name and remain anonymous.

As opposed to scriptural authority Chalmers now went on to give his own arguments for Malthus. Firstly, poverty could not be solved by money. If massive relief were taxed from the rich or given to the poor there would simply be less money for the rich to spend on luxuries and those employed in providing the latter would in turn become impoverished, and so it would go on. Secondly, no matter how many inspectors were appointed, public bodies could not inquire into every source of income and establish all unnecessary expenses incurred by each individual applicant. They could not "prune away all the

1. Ibid., p. 251.

superfluities of indulgence that go on in it". Thus, no matter how careful its managers, the more public relief available the more cunning people would become in posing their need for that relief as "the mighty hold of self-dependence is loosened and done away with".¹

The result was not only duplicity and an ever-growing relief bill, but the division of society into rich and poor as each group grew more incensed with the increasingly reluctant charity of the one and the ingratitude of the other. At the same time, Chalmers was anxious to defend any supporters of Malthus from charges of being unfeeling towards the poor, by offering the alternative of private charity. The rest of the article was given over to defining more precisely that ideal.

Chalmers' solution to the problem of poverty and pauperism was to set up "a complete moral apparatus in the larger towns of Scotland."² He came to that solution by comparing the Scottish parishes with and without an assessment. He concluded that those towns with such a tax, and so with a centralised relief system, gave the poor the illusion of a large bottomless fund for relief that they need not feel guilty for drawing upon since it was so distant and impersonal. To effect a solution, the towns should be divided up into the equivalent of many small rural parishes which, Chalmers maintained, successfully managed their relief from voluntary collections of £20 to £40 a year. In these new, smaller city parishes the essential conditions of the countryside would be reproduced. Firstly, all the inhabitants would know each other, and so the potential pauper could no longer rely on anonymity to shield any duplicity. Secondly, those in charge of

1. Ibid., pp. 257, 259.

2. Ibid., p. 287.

distributing relief would also come to know their charges more intimately and so know how to best serve their needs. He emphasised the importance of reproducing small rural parishes in the towns with elders drawn from each parochial neighbourhood. Lastly, on this local level, the old Scottish reluctance to be dependent upon the parish would re-emerge since it would be more apparent who the benefactors were, and so more humiliating to openly take from them unless in desperate straits.

The instruments to be used to set up these new parochial units in the towns and cities were the church and education. The provision of churches was to be extended to meet the needs of those small city districts - Glasgow alone would need thirty new churches. The funds for this would come from the savings that, according to Chalmers were a necessary corollary of a purely voluntary relief system. Thus the former legal assessment for poor relief would now be channelled into a church-building programme, the poor being adequately provided for out of the collections from the numerous new churches if those collections were distributed on a personal and local level. The end result would be an enlightened, moral and Christian population - the implication being that the problem of poverty existed because of an unenlightened artificial system, and the immoral and unchristian nature of the population. As a very important by-product, the new close relationship that would ensue in such small city parishes between the minister and his flock, and also between rich and poor through the now private benevolence of the former, would further the cause of "peace and righteousness and loyalty",¹ so dear to Chalmers' heart.

Thus Chalmers was indeed developing his ideas in these years, and

1. Ibid., p. 287.

putting together the details of a plan of action. The latter were new in the sense that he had not thought out any campaign against pauperism on his arrival from Kilmany. What was also new in this 1817 article was his argument about the inevitable success of those plans since they were founded on human nature. He had progressed from simple assertions of Malthusian principles to a consideration of the question why people reacted in the one instance to a legal fund, and in the other to a private one. Thus, it was not enough for him to set out the bare bones of the mechanism of this moral apparatus he was advocating for the towns. The "springs" of that mechanism, the reasons for its success, had also to be established.

Chalmers did recognise that since the distribution of wealth was unequal within the towns and cities, then a decentralisation of the poor relief system would result in the poorer areas being left to survive on their own without any redistribution of resources. There would be no equalising of the burden, as happened at present in Glasgow under the General Session and Town's Hospital. Yet, he claimed, the poorest area of any of the proposed new parishes in the towns would have the means within itself to support all of its poor. The reason was to do with human nature. Man's universal response to need, if left untrammelled by artificial taxes and government dictates, would be sufficient. It was primarily this exposition of human nature that was to be taken up later on, and which he was to claim as being proven by the St. John's experiment. As will be seen, he had laid the foundations of the theory before conducting the experiment proper. According to Chalmers, this was possible since he had already observed the rural parishes, and since human nature was universal, what worked there would work in the cities.

Throughout this article Chalmers' emphasis was on man, his social

condition, and his ability to survive without artificial legal expedients. All of these emphases were standard Enlightenment concepts. He only once referred to the potential influence of forces outwith man's control, such as famine and trade depression, that might make his survival more difficult. These occurrences were "uncommon", he argued, and could still be alleviated by the natural and voluntary response of those who were well-off in the parish, even if such relief might have to be on a slightly larger scale than usual.¹ Throughout his life Chalmers was to maintain this opinion of trade depressions, famine and unemployment being exceptional. The one important difference later on was to be his acceptance that in such severe crises as the famines in Ireland and the Highlands in the 1840's short-term measures of legal taxation should be resorted to, but kept distinct from voluntary efforts at relief.²

In a sermon in November 1817, Chalmers repeated his call for more churches in Scotland, and in Glasgow in particular.³ He again emphasised their role in drawing the rich and poor together and in removing the discordant notes in society. By February 1818 he had produced his second article specifically on poor relief, "Comparison of Scotch and English pauperism", again for the Edinburgh Review. Here he outlined the pure Scottish system which did not depend upon a legal tax but on individual frugality and on the help of relatives, neighbours and the rich. However, he was far more definite now on two points. First, the economic ability of the poor to save and to

1. Ibid., p. 265-6.

2. T. Chalmers, 'The Political Economy of a Famine', North British Review, 13 (1847), pp. 261, 279; see below p. 354.

3. T. Chalmers, "A Sermon Delivered in the Tron Church, Glasgow, on Wednesday 19 November 1817 - the Day of the Funeral of Her Royal Highness the princess Charlotte of Wales", in Sermons Preached on Public Occasions (Glasgow, 1817).

provide for themselves and for each other.¹ Secondly, the universal tenets of human nature that made this possible once the compulsory system had been cleared away. That is, his solution rested solely on natural, and, therefore, inevitable human responses. He appears to have moved away from placing the church and Christianity as the vital inspiring force behind the system, though he still emphasised their linch-pin role in being the most effective vehicle to organise the "retracing" process of conducting the town parishes back to a rural system. He now stated that the people in the towns would have been materially and morally better off if the basic voluntary poor relief system had been left intact, and even if the supply of churches and ministers had not kept pace with the population growth. As it was, the combination of these two negative factors entailed the need for drastic remedying.

Scotland was in a better position than England to effect a solution, Chalmers affirmed, since it was nearer in time to the purer method than its neighbour. In Scotland, the church and its ministers were necessary to help people break through the preconceptions of the artificial methods more quickly, but they were not features of the new system itself, which relied solely on human nature for its ultimate success. Thus he had moved from his March 1817 position of urging a "moral mechanism", that of education and the church, to effect a solution, but rather argued that it would be solved by "the operation of the mechanism of nature".² Thus in a free and natural society men would instinctively realise that their individual interest would be best served by ensuring the total welfare of their neighbours and the community at large. True, in its present weakened and impure

1. Ibid., p. 311.

2. Ibid., pp. 315, 318.

state, this mechanism of nature would best come to fruition through the medium of the church. The church itself, however, was no longer the main focus. Exactly why Chalmers had reached this conclusion at this particular point is difficult to say. It did fit in with his type of logic and his general ideas on human nature from his Kilmany days.¹ It also corresponded with his reading of Hume. In his Tron Church Sermons, published in 1819, he referred to Hume frequently, agreeing with his belief in the existence of natural virtues without a religious basis.²

In this 1818 review article, Chalmers stated that the basis of the neighbourly self-help scheme he was advocating was in fact "self-preservation", not Christian conviction. If no other means of relief existed, men would naturally help each other in the hope that the same would be done for them should the need ever arise. Much of this reasoning was to be expanded in Chalmers' later writings on the subject. In particular, he later gave a far more detailed explanation of how exactly man's compassion and sympathy operated in its natural state.³ Again it is a mistake to read the later works of Chalmers and simply to apply them all to this period. However, the kernel of the problem had been identified. All he needed to do now was to prove that it worked in practice.

The vital question now for Chalmers was whether his proposals would appear attractive enough to his contemporaries for him to be given the opportunity to put them into practice. It has already been seen in chapter one that Macgill had reached the exact opposite

1. See above, pp. 30-31.

2. T. Chalmers, Sermons Preached in the Tron Church. For example in sermon 12. He referred to this idea again in seven of the 16 sermons in the volume.

3. See below, pp. 135-6.

conclusion about the necessity for a public assessment system, especially in the Glasgow situation.¹ Skene Ogilvy's tract was a direct answer to the March 1817 review article. He attacked the latter basing his arguments on the "peculiarly calamitous state of the poor" in his parish.² Burns tended more towards Chalmers' premises, but the practicalities of the trade depression were making him question those premises. Interestingly, Macgill, Burns and Ogilvy all mentioned deacons in their works, and their historic role in dealing with poor relief. Burns in particular suggested that the order be revived. Chalmers as yet had not referred to such an order as a practical possibility.³ It may have been that the idea was common among contemporaries. At any rate it does not appear to have originated with Chalmers.

The other important recording of Chalmers' views on the eve of his actual experiment was in 1819, in a tract entitled 'The Example of Our Saviour A Guide and An Authority in the Establishment of Charitable Institutions'. The nature of this work and its audience dictated a similar style to his earlier sermons that had touched on poor relief. That is, he was once more intent on giving scriptural authority for his statements. He used such texts as Mtt. 15:32, John

1. See above, pp. 19-25; S. Macgill, Discourses and Essays on Subjects of Public Interest (Edinburgh, 1819), pp. 412, 414, 426.

2. S. Ogilvy, Letter to the Heritors and Gentlemen of the parish of Old Machar (n.p., 1817), p. 1. Also, C.P., CHA 4.6.41, 16 October 1817, S. Ogilvy to T. Chalmers: Ogilvy had found out that Chalmers was the author of the Review article he had attacked. He was very upset over this and wrote to explain his position personally to Chalmers.

3. See above, p. 79.

6:24-26, and Mtt. 12-15.¹ These particular biblical references were new since his Kilmany period, and as such reflected the development of his theories. At the outset he made it clear once more that as regards poverty the natural virtues of compassion and benevolence were enough to relieve simple want. He added, however, that if individual Christians acted according to the gospel message there would be an abundance, not just the sufficiency that nature alone would provide. But the Christian had to be cautious in his exercise of compassion. Although he should follow Christ's example in such miracles as the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, he should heed Christ's warning in John 6:25-27. In other words, Christian compassion should be accompanied by discernment in establishing whether the need in question was a real one. This did not apply to disease, however. He stated that Christ had been moved to heal any who were sick who were brought to him, and never saw the need to discriminate. Thus disease was a 'safe' need, since no one would fake it to obtain relief. Therefore the relief of sickness and illness could and should be as abundant as possible. Chalmers went on to argue for hospitals and institutions for the ill funded by the public, and he was to maintain this argument for the rest of his life.

By now it was clear in Chalmers' writings that he saw no contradiction in preaching on man's sinfulness and yet writing about the natural man with his innate and irresistible desire to help and

1. Mtt. 15:32, "Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, 'I have compassion on the multitude, because they have continued with us now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting lest they faint in the way.'" ; John 6:24-26, "When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? Jesus answered them, and said, 'Verily, verily I say unto you, ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled.'" ; Mtt. 12:15, "But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all".

relieve his fellow creatures. This would only take place, however, in a pure situation with no complications such as potential outside relief from innumerable public bodies. This natural virtue of compassion was based on self-interest, which was also at the root of sinful man. Man still needed redemption, therefore, and so Chalmers could safely write about man in his natural state on the one hand and preach the gospel on the other. The 1819 tract on "The Example of Christ ... " still has an underlying tension, however. For Chalmers had to consider what happened to these natural virtues of compassion and benevolence when an individual was converted. He argued that these virtues would be purified and elevated to a Christian stance based on selflessness and Christian love.

There seems to have still been a tension in Chalmers' mind over this argument. He laboured over it in this particular tract and in the selection of his sermons published as his Tron Sermons. The Christian could not be left alone to exercise his virtues, as the natural man could, since by his very definition a Christian acknowledged that he never achieved perfection in the exercise of virtue and needed Christ and the lessons of the gospel repeatedly expounded to him. By relegating the church to a secondary position as simply establishing the means for the only efficient and practicable solution to pauperism, he was in effect abandoning the labouring classes who formed the majority of that solution to their natural state since that was the vital element for success. Assuredly, he also hoped they would be converted in the process, since it was the Christian church and its officers that would be in charge of creating the small neighbourly units of communal help, but it was not necessary that they be converted for the solution to poor relief and poverty to succeed, since even a few Christians in a

neighbourhood, he argued, would effect by their example a general change in the morals of the rest. This does not sound like the newly converted pastor of evangelical fervour who had arrived in Glasgow in 1815. There was a tension in the argument, notwithstanding what Chalmers claimed, and eventually he would have to choose which he wanted more: the natural man or the Christian man. It is a contention of this thesis that it was the latter that won the day, and indeed had to emerge triumphant in the end.

For all that, Chalmers' theories and ideas in these years, 1815-19, were attractive to some in Glasgow. Their sheer economy - that is, doing away with a burdensome assessment - appealed to many of those who footed the bill. It was argued by some that this solution was too harsh, leaving the poor to their own devices.¹ At the same time, a desperate situation existed in Glasgow official circles as to how the apparently never-ending applications for relief could and should be met. Might Chalmers' scheme after all be the solution they were searching for?

Meanwhile, among the Tron congregation, Chalmers was building up a solid and influential power base. He did not put any of the above ideas on poor relief into practice in that parish. He openly stated that he never conducted a poor relief survey of the Tron, and apparently considered it such a huge and anomalous parish as being beyond help until radically reduced in size.² Thus the numbers of paupers on its rolls was allowed to follow Glasgow's increasing trend. By 1819 it had at least 271 sessional paupers as compared to the 209

1. Remarks on Two Articles in the Edinburgh Review on the Causes and Cure of Pauperism, by the Author of "Letters from Scotland" (Manchester, 1818).

2. C.P., CHA 3.8.43, 1818, T. Chalmers to J. Ewing.

when Chalmers arrived in 1815,¹ and that did not include those sent to the Town's Hospital for relief. At the same time, he was training some of the Tron elders in his ideas on parish work. According to one of his note-books, he had thirty-nine men working as Sabbath school teachers, visitors and "other parochial office-bearers" in the Tron.² William Collins, John Smith the youngest, David Stow, George Heggie and Peter Gilfillan, a merchant were particularly active in the Sabbath School Society that was formed at the end of 1816. As was pointed out in chapter two these schools multiplied rapidly, and according to Hanna were attended by 1,200 children, all from the Tron parish, by the end of 1818.³ In 1817 the schools were reorganised on a local basis in the parish. That is, the parish was divided into small districts, with a school being in any available room or house in the district, and the teacher being responsible for all the children in his area. The Society itself was a formal organisation, with monthly meetings advertised by printed notices to the teachers.⁴ This emphasis on locality was the first attempt to enact any of Chalmers' ideas as they had developed in these years, although within the context of sabbath schools it also owed much to Stow and Collins' initiative.

Chalmers was particularly friendly with some of his parochial agents in the Tron, and began to spread his ideas amongst them. Among the Chalmers' papers there are two letters in particular that stand out. Both were from sabbath teachers - George Burns and David Stow,

1. Cleland, Annals, 2, pp. 427-8; G.S.M., 9 November 1815, 13 July 1819: Tron 271 sessional paupers, St. John's 125 (some of whom were from the old Tron parish).

2. C.P., CHA 6.2.8, 'General Memoranda', 1815-1818.

3. Hanna, Memoirs, 2, p. 122.

4. C.P., CHA 5.3.156, printed notice.

who was also an elder.¹ They stated that their experiences had tallied with Chalmers' belief that education could not be given free without devaluing it in the process. Burns went on to say that with one particular family he had himself offered to pay part of the fees for a day school, as an encouragement to send their children to the sabbath school, but the family protested and insisting on paying them all, since:

... they could not think of allowing an individual to incur so much expense - they would rather make a struggle and discharge the debt themselves. (The parents themselves had said 'we cannot think Sir of letting you give out so much of your own pocket - its not like as if we were getting it from a Society').²

Statements like this must have confirmed Chalmers' ideas on the operation of man's natural instincts once freed from artificial public charity and confronted with only personal offers of help. At the end of the letter Burns added that it was Chalmers who had given the money to make the offer of paying a quarter of the fees out of his 'own' pocket, which does make the incident appear somewhat contrived. Nonetheless, in convincing others of the efficacy of his ideas it was obviously useful for Chalmers.

The only indication surviving of the opinion of someone from the lower classes on Chalmers' ideas came from one James McLeish. Unfortunately there is no evidence as to who exactly McLeish was, apart from the fact that he was a Tron parishioner.³ At some point Chalmers had lent him money, but he wrote to say that as yet he could not repay it. He said that he had read and agreed with Chalmers' Review article. However, although he himself worked sixteen hours a day, he did not have enough to live on. He compared the oppression by

1. C.P., CHA 4.7.16, 10 December 1818, G. Burns to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.13.49, 22 April 1819, D. Stow to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.7.16, 10 December 1818, G. Burns to T. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 4.8.46, 20 June 1818, J. McLeish to T. Chalmers.

employers to Israel's bondage in Egypt. The point of the letter turned out to be a request for a job in Chalmers' new church in St. John's. There is no further trace of McLeish, nor any indication he ever received such a job. The religious allusions in the letter imply he was a Christian, but he was very poor, despite all his hard work. It is a great pity Chalmers' reply to him - if he gave him one - has been lost.

Of more immediate importance to Chalmers being allowed to conduct a practical experiment in his developing poor relief theories, was the continued support of those middle classes who had brought him to Glasgow in 1815, and the support of any others within the Glasgow 'elite' whom he could convert to his ideas. It will be remembered that in the 1817 Edinburgh Review article on poor relief he had called on the Glasgow authorities to provide thirty more churches as a start to solving the problem of poor relief. How would the Glasgow officials respond to that?

The cause of church extension in Glasgow since 1782 had not proved a very successful one. In that year St. Enoch's church had been built and its parish allocated. Apart from some chapels of ease, no more churches were built in the city until 1816. It was not that there had been no agitation for more church accomodation. Interestingly, it was in 1812 during Kirkman Finlay's first term of office as Lord Provost that the first serious proposal was made. Finlay was concerned with the inadequacy of Establishment church provision. Although he later opposed Chalmers' election to the Tron, once Chalmers was actually in Glasgow Finlay became friendly with him and offered him support for various concerns connected

with the Christian edification of the masses. In March 1812, at the prompting of a Memorial from the Glasgow Presbytery, Finlay set the procedure in motion to build a church near Gallowgate Street in the eastern part of Glasgow. However, nothing came of this proposal, mainly because of lack of funds and the objections by Dissenters to a proposal for a general tax to raise those funds.¹

Against this background of opposition, and the city's apparently insufficient funds, the proposal for a church at Graham Street was shelved. It was resurrected in January 1816 when the then Lord Provost, Henry Monteith, stated that the city funds were in a more affluent state. A committee on churches was appointed to inquire into the situation. On the same day, a letter from Alexander McGrigor, a lawyer, was read to the council. It stated that "several respectable gentlemen" of Glasgow, unfortunately not named, wanted to provide money to build a parish church and for a minister's stipend. The magistrates and council would manage the church, but the gentlemen themselves would nominate a minister for it till such time as the corporation was able to pay them back. This was remitted to the churches committee, and on their recommendation the council refused its terms.²

On 26 March the committee on churches reported on its original

1. G.B.R., 20 March 1812, 7 and 28 December 1813; G.U.L., Spalding Collection 2490, "A Serious Address to the Inhabitants of Glasgow, on the Necessity of opposing the Bill for Building and Endowing additional Establishment Churches in Glasgow, and augmenting the stipends of the Ministers" (Glasgow, 30 October 1813).

2. G.B.R., 23 January, 29 February 1816.

remit of January - only to say that in fact the city's finances were not as solvent as had been hoped, though it was expected that this would change in the future with the sale of some of its land. Yet they also considered it as being "indispensably necessary" due to the "great increase in the population" to proceed with building a church in Graham Street.¹ The council approved this, but wanted further financial details. Nine days later a letter from Mr. Charles S. Parker, who was a councillor that year, and Mr. William Rodger, was read to the council. It will be remembered that both these men had been on the council in 1814-15 and had supported Chalmers then and later. No mention is made of them being the same gentlemen as in the January letter. Rodger and Parker said they were writing on behalf of "a certain number of gentlemen, friends of Dr. Chalmers" who considered the Tron church to be unsuitable for their minister in its size and dampness, which were damaging his health.² They therefore proposed to lend the council £6,000 to be paid back over ten years and only asked to be consulted on its "plan and situation". Since Parker was a member of the council he presumably knew of the resolution of 26 March, and of the committee's determination to build a church despite the present lack of funds. Also, he would know that it was expected that the city's funds would eventually improve, and so any loan would reasonably be expected to be repaid.

As a result of this second private proposal of aid in the

1. G.B.R., 26 March 1816. It was now referred to as the church in McFarlan Street which was the street adjacent to Graham Street.

2. As far back as November 1814 Chalmers had expressed fears of being unable to make himself heard in the Tron without great effort, C.P., CHA 4.3.60, 25 November 1814, R. Tennent to T. Chalmers. He later expressed discomfort with the church building itself complaining of its size and draughtiness and the detrimental effects of this on his health, e.g., C.P., CHA 3.8.63, 23 November 1818, T. Chalmers to W. Rodger.

building of a church, yet another committee was appointed to confer with Parker, Rodger and the others involved, and to report back. Unfortunately, no further trace of this exists in the council records. On 12 April 1816 Chalmers recorded in his diary a conversation with Rodger and Parker about a new church and about the conditions for it that had been agreed with the council. Parker told Chalmers that if the latter should die or move out of the city, then Parker and the others had agreed that they would still provide the money for a church. Chalmers did add that he would not like to go to a new church "if the seat rents were to be made too high as to be an oppressive tax on my present people and they are to exert themselves for a stipulation to that effect shall be satisfied if they be not higher than those of St. George's." On 15 April he recorded that Parker had spoken to the council committee which had agreed to the seat rents provision and to Chalmers not being tied down to filling the charge of the church, but rather being left free to leave Glasgow and go elsewhere if he so desired.¹

Six days after Chalmers' diary entries, the council gave the go-ahead for a church in McFarlan Street, and a month after that the council committee was authorised to procure plans and estimates from the architect Mr. David Hamilton. These costs turned out to be higher than expected - the building alone would amount to £7,000. The annual charge on the city's funds for the beadle and precentor's salaries, daily repairs, the minister's stipend of £400, and £350 annual interest on the £7,000 was worked out to be £850. In other words, for the building itself a loan had been taken out. The expected annual revenue from the church - that is from the 1,600 seat rents, estimated at 7/6d. each "being about 1/6d. less than the average of St. George's

1. C.P., CHA 6.1.8, Journal, vol. 5, 12 and 15 April 1816.

and the Tron", was £600. The committee believed that the towns' funds could come up with the £250 annually needed to meet the costs. As a result, the authorisation for the project to erect and endow a new parish in McFarlan Street was finally given on 15 October 1816.¹

There is no definite proof from all this that it was Parker and Rodger's proposal that in fact underwrote the building of St. John's, especially since they had given no recorded indication of wanting their new church to be a new parish church, which the town council still wanted. However, the council definitely took a loan of some sort to build the new church. Conceivably, they could have returned to the gentlemen who had offered help in January, under Mr. McGrigor. Yet there was no stipulation about the minister of the new church, which had been a condition of the January offer. Also, a special point had been made of ensuring that the seat rents of the new church were not higher than those of St. George's. The coincidence of this with Chalmers' own stipulations to Parker and Rodger does suggest that in fact there might after all be some truth behind the old 'myth' of St. John's being created if not for Chalmers, then at least by his followers.² It would certainly explain why in all the official records over the next few years there was never any doubt that Chalmers would in fact be elected to St. John's, if he wanted to be.

At this stage, in mid-1816, there was still no hint on Chalmers'

1. G.B.R., 21 May, 15 October 1816. There was a precedent for taking such loans. In June 1812 William Rodger had been on a council committee for repairing the Outer High Church. The cost was going to be considerable - £1,000 - and the council agreed to an offer from ten "gentlemen" to lend £100 each at 7%.

2. Six of Chalmers' original eight council supporters of 1814-15 were also on the 1815-16 council: E. Richardson, R. Hood, J. Moore, J. Heywood, C.S. Parker and R. Tennent, jnr. The first printed statement that St. John's was built for Chalmers seems to have been in W. Keddie, Memorials of St. John's Congregation, Glasgow, Established and Free (Glasgow, 1874), p. 1. Keddie was an elder in Free St. John's.

part of using any new church for a trial experiment in poor relief. Rather, it fits in with Chalmers' activity generally in 1816 in his attempts to make his position as a city minister more bearable and not hindered by other concerns. It was towards the end of 1816 that Chalmers put his thoughts together about the specific problem of poor relief, as has been seen above in his two Review articles and his sermon on the death of Princess Charlotte. At some point during this period the idea must have occurred to him to use the new parish of St. John's as a case study.

The first definite statement proposing this idea came in a report printed in March 1818, commissioned by a worried Town's Hospital. In this it was stated that if three conditions were met Chalmers would be able to meet the wants of all the existing sessional poor in that parish, and would ensure that not one new pauper would be sent from that parish to the Hospital, the parish being repaid for this out of the assessment from which its parishioners would be paying into but drawing nothing out. The first of the three conditions was to be allowed to retain his own church collections as opposed to sending them into the General Session for its central redistribution of them. Secondly, his own parishioners, that is the St. John's inhabitants, should be enabled to obtain church seats. Lastly, the laws of residence should be enforced in the city at large, and so ensuring that only parishioners born in St. John's parish or resident there for three years, be legally entitled to relief from the parish.¹

The author of the report in which these proposals of Chalmers were contained, was Chalmers' influential friend, James Ewing.

1. J. Ewing, Report for the Directors of the Town's Hospital on the Management of the City Poor, the Suppression of Mendicity, and the Principles of the Plan for the New hospital (Glasgow, 1818), pp. 158-160, hereafter Report for the Directors of the Town's Hospital.

During the 1818 fever epidemic Ewing was active in the council with proposals to combat it.¹ In 1817 and 1818 he was also a Director of the Town's Hospital, and it was in that capacity that he had drawn up the above report. As Brown has pointed out, Ewing himself seems to have been something of a Malthusian in his attitude towards poor relief, coupled with a belief in the traditional Scottish approach to poverty.²

Throughout the 1818 report Ewing outlined various expedients to tighten up the scrutiny of the poor on the session rolls and in the Hospital, and referred to von Voght's work in Hamburg, and Colquhoun's ideas on the causes of poverty.³ In the main body of the report he discussed Chalmers' plan of abolishing assessments, multiplying the number of parishes, making the links between giver and receiver more immediate and intimate and so rendering relief less attractive, and extending the provision of education. Both here and at the end of the report, Ewing said that he did not agree entirely with Chalmers' views, but did with his intentions. At the end of the report Ewing included a letter written to him from Chalmers. The three proposals Ewing had outlined in the main body of the report regarding independent control of church-door collections, a parochial preference in seat-letting, and a law of residence were all repeated. It was only vaguely suggested, however, that the parish conducting such an experiment would eventually earn the "right of exemption from the

1. G.B.R., 21 April 1818.

2. Brown, Chalmers, p. 122; J. Ewing, Report for the Directors of the Town's Hospital, pp. 9-10.

3. Ibid., pp. 92, 167-8, 197-205; see above, pp. 3-4.

assessments" by coping with all its poor internally. At this stage this was not presented as a condition for conducting any such experiment.¹

From Chalmers' correspondence it is obvious that this report was vital to him. Again, although I could find it nowhere actually stated that it was Chalmers' friends who had funded a new church, it was assumed from the beginning of 1818 onwards that the new parish of St. John's would be used to demonstrate his theories. This was the case although it was not till 6 June 1818 that the council actually nominated a minister for St. John's. Unlike 1814, the verdict this time was unanimous, and no other candidates were proposed. As well as the possibility of a financial reason for the council being amenable to Chalmers' election, two other reasons were apparent. First, as has already been pointed out, the council itself was becoming very worried about the poor relief situation in the city and was anxious to be seen to be doing something about it before it was completely out of hand. Chalmers' scheme, with its promise of parochial self-sufficiency and no assessment may have appeared utopian, but what did they have to lose? Secondly, Chalmers' support on the council and amidst the middle classes generally in Glasgow, was very strong by 1818.

Unlike 1814, Chalmers himself cavassed for support in aid of the establishment of his experiment. He had become acquainted with Ewing almost immediately after his arrival in Glasgow.² Chalmers used him as an ally in the Town's Hospital and on the council to obtain his own

1. J. Ewing, Report for the Directors of the Town's Hospital, pp. 216-220.

2. See above, p. 75.

way, but there also appears to have been a genuine friendship between the two men. As regards the remainder of Chalmers' influential support during this period, two dates should be borne in mind - 5 June 1818, Chalmers' election to St. John's, and 18 August 1819, when the town council decided on the details of Chalmers' proposed poor relief system. In other words, two town councils were involved - that elected in November 1817, and that of November 1818. In each of these councils three of Chalmers' 1814 supporters were present.¹ From his correspondence it is possible to establish eight more council supporters for each of these years: Kirkman Finlay, James Ewing, William Dalglish, Robert Findlay, Robert Haddow, Daniel McKenzie, James Cleland (Superintendent of Public Works,), and James Reddie (Town clerk and assessor). It is also likely that the Lord Provost of 1818-19, Henry Monteith (1765-1848), who was also a merchant councillor in 1817-18, lent his support, despite his opposition to Chalmers in 1814.

It would appear from this that there were nine men in all on whose support Chalmers could rely. These nine were some of the most influential Glasgow citizens of the time. Every single one of them had an unbroken run of office as a town councillor or official from 1814 or 1815, to 1819 in one case, 1820 in three cases, 1822 in two cases, and 1824 in three cases.² In addition, five of the nine were members of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce during these

1. 1817-18: E Richardson, J. Heywood and R. Tennent. 1818-19: E. Richardson, A. Newbigging, R. Tennent.

2. K. Finlay, W. Dalglish, R. Haddow, D. MacKenzie, J. Ewing, R. Findlay, H. Monteith, J. Cleland and J. Reddie respectively.

years.¹

The nature of this council backing can be charted chronologically and reveals how Chalmers' own plans for St. John's materialised and developed during the vital year, 1817-18. On 15 March 1818 Chalmers wrote to James Reddie (1775-1852), the town clerk. In this letter, Chalmers thanked Reddie for the latter's previous communication approving of the principles of Chalmers' "plan" and offering his, Reddie's, services.² It is obvious from what followed that this referred to Chalmers' poor relief plans for Glasgow "to retrace its steps - to restore to its clergy the same unfettered independence that they have in parishes in the country," and Chalmers acknowledged that Porteous' plan to control poor relief rigorously should be tried. Chalmers stated that he had decided not to contest any one matter about his parish. He then proceeded to give a list of conditions that he would like to be met. In relation to these conditions he wanted to take up Reddie's offer of legal advice and help on two points. First, as regards the legal right of the General Session to appropriate the collection of each parish. Chalmers wanted that clause to be kept out of the decree of erection of St. John's parish. Secondly, he wanted an enactment to ensure that parishioners had priority in seat-letting in all churches in the city, as those seats became vacant. Chalmers added that if his kirk session (that is, St. John's) was not given total control over the management of its poor, then "we should not be expected to take any part in that

1. K. Finlay, 1814-20; J. Ewing, 1816-17 and 1818-20; R. Findlay, 1814-20; D. MacKenzie, 1814-15 and 1816-17; and H. Monteith, 1814-20.

2. N.L.S., James Reddie Collection, MS. 3704/72, 14 March 1818, T. Chalmers to J. Reddie. That Reddie did help Chalmers' achieve his aims seems likely: the clause allowing St. John's parish to distribute its own collections, as opposed to the General Session, was duly inserted in the decret of erection, G.B.R., 7 September 1819.

management". He also promised that his own system would have a "prosperous result" in the poorest parish of Glasgow.

Three weeks after this letter to Reddie, on 7 April 1818, the town council met. One of the items on the agenda was seat rents. Robert Findlay, seconded by James Ewing, proposed a motion that the seat rent committee set apart a number of seats in St. John's church:

for the accommodation of the poor parishioners, either at no rent or at a very low rent, ... and ascertain how far the same measure can be accomplished in the other churches ...¹

Findlay was a Glasgow banker, active in the council and Chamber of Commerce, and involved in public issues like the fever outbreak of 1818.² Thus it would seem that so far, with Reddie, Findlay, and Ewing's help at least, Chalmers had gained one of his conditions about seat letting.

On 24 April, Ewing wrote to Chalmers about a meeting the previous day of the Hospital directors. In the wake of Ewing's printed report, it had been decided to conduct a scrutiny of all the city poor, and to consider the best way to manage that poor. These matters had been referred to a committee, to which Chalmers had been nominated. Ewing added in the letter that he and Robert Dalglish, who both represented the Merchants' House as Directors, had agreed not to bring forward Chalmers' "proposal" as yet. Presumably this referred to Chalmers' plan for the management of poor relief in his parish. Robert Dalglish (1770-1844) was not a town councillor in this period, although he was

1. G.B.R., 7 April 1818.

2. Ibid., 21 April 1818; Findlay was also a director of the Glasgow Provident Bank in 1815 and a Director of the Royal Infirmary in 1816, 1819 and 1820.

later to be Glasgow's Lord Provost from 1830 to 1832. He was a textile manufacturer, and was in partnership with his elder brother William, who was a councillor continuously from 1814 to 1820, and with Patrick Falconer, who was at that time an elder in the Tron and who later moved to St. John's as an elder and lifelong friend of Chalmers'.

The exact terms of this proposal supported by Ewing and Dalglish are apparent in a letter from Chalmers to Ewing a month later - on 26 May 1818. In this letter Chalmers mentioned several men whose help he and Ewing had been canvassing over the prospect of a new parochial system in St. John's. Again, it seemed almost taken for granted that Chalmers would be elected for the parish, the question being only on what terms. In this line, Chalmers referred to conversations between himself and Robert Haddow, a Glasgow councillor from 1814 to 1820, on the subject of "a parochial arrangement". He also mentioned Henry Monteith, and told Ewing that if he thought it right he could show this letter to Monteith "who had taken up I understand a very strong and as I think a very sound impression on the subject of parishioners having the preference of accomodation." Indeed, Chalmers added, Ewing could make "any use of the communication that you think proper."¹

Henry Montieth (1765-1848) owned a printing and dyeing works, was a member of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, and also of the town council from 1814 to 1824 continuously, four of which years he was

1. C.P., CHA 3.8.43, no date, T. Chalmers to J. Ewing. The actual letter is undated, but on 27 May 1818 (CHA 4.7.62), Ewing wrote to Chalmers and referred to the latter's letter of 26 May. Ewing's letter bears a direct correlation to Chalmers' letter above, and so it seems fair to surmise that CHA 3.8.43 was written on 26 May 1818.

also Lord Provost. In other words, a very useful supporter. Daniel MacKenzie and Robert Tennent were also mentioned by name in this letter. The latter was one of Chalmers' original Tron supporters. Daniel MacKenzie was likewise a councillor, representing the Merchants' House from 1814 to 1820, and was on the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce.

In this important letter a vital insight is gained into Chalmers' tactics at this stage. First of all, he made it clear that his "friends" were not to push the St. John's project as being "personally agreeable" to Chalmers himself. In other words, any of the original talk of 1816 to procure a building better suited to the great but imposed upon preacher was to cease. In explanation, he wrote that quite simply it might not be true, since so much was as yet unsettled about the parish plans he wished to see adopted if he did go to St. John's. However, certain factors "would induce me to accept of the new Parish" if they were not violently objected to by "any considerable number" of the town council.¹ He listed these: the superior physical situation of the new church; most of the new parish would be part of his present Tron parish and so he had connections with it already; and in particular, if some "excellent members" of his Tron kirk session were assigned to St. John's. Chalmers' next statement was startling: he would have nothing at all to do with St. John's unless his Tron Congregation, that is not the St. John's parishioners, were given first preference for seats. This was despite all his statements in 1817 and 1818 that what was needed in the towns was small, local parishes drawing their hearers and officers only from their own geographical area, and his inclusion of this in his three

1. Ibid.

initial conditions.

Chalmers of course recognised the "apparent contrariety" of this proposal, and proceeded to explain his reasons for it. Quite simply, it was money. His Tron congregation had given him the money for an assistant. He would need such financial help again if he was to hire an assistant for St. John's. He hoped also to have "several hundred" St. John's parishioners in his congregation, but the bulk would be the wealthy Tron members. With the financial help of the latter, he then hoped to hold an evening service exclusively for his parishioners. Presumably he thought that not enough parishioners would apply for seats for the morning service, and so, rather than leave them vacant, he could maintain his links with his better-off congregation and at the same time obtain a breathing space to evangelise his actual spiritual charges. Thus Chalmers was the first to break one of the three conditions laid down in March.

Chalmers next went on to discuss the provisions for poor relief in the new parish. He argued that his plans for the parochial management as laid out in his printed letter in Ewing's Hospital report, "cannot be put into execution without a wealthy day congregation in the first instance". Again Chalmers explained that this was not a contradiction of his previous assertions that "in a natural state of things there is not a District or Parish of the Town that out of its own capabilities cannot sustain the whole burden of its own Pauperism." However, this would be a gradual process, and he proceeded to outline its stages. First of all, the day collection would be great if he got his own way about the Tron congregation having first preference for seats in St. John's. It would maintain the already existing sessional poor, and the surplus would endow parish schools. Any new poor cases would be supplied out of the

parochial evening collections. For the first time reference was made to deacons in charge of that latter collection and of its disbursement. As the joint educational and poor relief ventures gained ground, seats in St. John's church would be let as they fell vacant to parishioners, thus achieving all his original objects: an educational apparatus, a moral one, and an ecclesiastical one. Eventually therefore, the parish would be proof of "the entire sufficiency of the means of any Parish to the wants of any Parish".¹ Having made all this clear, he went on to say that he did not want to discredit the principle of seat-letting primarily to parishioners, since it was a principle of such importance "in the civic and christian economy of a large town".² However, he maintained that the process he had described of a gradual evolution towards this, was not detrimental to its ultimate achievement. He added that he thought that about eight hundred of his Tron congregation would go with him to St. John's, which parish in any case incorporated 5,500 of his Tron parishioners.

Reading this important letter, the impression is conveyed that Chalmers knew exactly what he wanted and also was confident he could obtain it. Towards the end he did advert to the possibility of remaining in the new Tron parish, in the event of the terms of his transferral to St. John's being unsuitable. it is obvious that he hated the prospect of being saddled with such a parish, but

... such is my faith in my principles respecting pauperism that I by no means despair of carrying them into effect.³

1. Ibid. Chalmers' idea to use deacons to visit the poor and disburse relief was also reminiscent of von Voght's work in Hamburg. There is evidence that he was aware of the latter: C.P., CHA 4.14.17, 10 March 1819, D. Thom to T. Chalmers.

2. This appears to be Chalmers' first reference to this phrase. He was later to use it as the title for three volumes on that subject.

3. C.P., CHA 3.8.43, n.d., T. Chalmers to J. Ewing.

He added that his system of poor relief management would take longer to establish in the new Tron with regard to personnel to administer it and as regards establishing a relationship with the occupants of the "new" Tron area. Chalmers had made "no enquiries whatever" as to its pauperism. Again this indicated that the St. John's project had been on the cards for some time, and that he had opted out of what was a very poor city area for the first trial of his experiment. Indeed, his parochial work after 1817 seems to have been taken up exclusively with that area that was to be St. John's, and not the congested lanes and closes of the more central Tron parish.¹ Perhaps he was not as convinced about its ability to succeed anywhere as he had maintained? At any rate, Ewing's reply the next day indicated that he at least considered there would be no problem in gaining Chalmers' conditions. The stage seemed to be set.

On 5 June 1818 Chalmers was unanimously elected to St. John's. Immediately before the election, a motion was proposed by the Dean of Guild, Henry Monteith, and accepted by the council that if Chalmers were elected then church seats in St John's would be let first of all to those parishioners of St. John's who had applied for them before the last council meeting on 13 May. That is, before Chalmers' letter to Ewing. Secondly, preference should be given to Chalmers' present Tron congregation. All other seat applications were to be considered "on an equal footing".² On 15 June Chalmers wrote to the council accepting the charge, and thanking the councillors over

1. For example, the surviving records of his parish work from 1818 onwards all consist of surveys of his "parish" of St. John's, not the Tron: C.P., CHA 5.1.1-31, Survey of St. John's Parish, 1818; vol. 3 of Parochial Survey, 1818-19; Parochial Survey, 1818-20.

2. G.B.R., 15 June 1818. In fact, it was decided on 16 June 1818 that after the Tron congregation applications were met, next in priority would be those from the residents of St. John's parish.

the specific issue of accommodating his wishes on the seat-letting.¹

As in Chalmers' original removal to Glasgow, this election to St. John's provides more evidence of the workings of that city's politics. It also bears witness to the influence Chalmers was able to draw upon by this stage of his stay in the city. Ewing told Chalmers that the latter's letter of 25 May had been read to the council on the day of the election to St. John's, and that the council members were "highly delighted with it".² This was to be important since Chalmers later maintained that in electing him they were also sanctioning his scheme for poor relief management. His actual removal to St. John's was to be delayed. On 28 August 1818 it was reported to the council that the tower of the church had given way and was in danger of collapsing. It was to be another year before the building was made safe, and the removal could be effected. It was because of this long delay that the actual 'conditions' of the election became rather vague and Chalmers found that he had to make them clear again before he could enter the parish with peace of mind about the certainty of getting his own way over its management. Interestingly, it was the contract for the building of St. John's that the Trades Incorporations cited as yet another example of the corruption of the city council in not opening up such contracts for public bidding and so avoiding the delay and costs of St. John's.³ It seems St. John's parish was fated to be the

1. G.B.R., 16 June 1818; CP., CHA 4.9.39, 6 June 1818, R. Tennent to T. Chalmers. Tennent was on the town council, 1817-18. In this letter he told Chalmers that there had been one hundred and twenty applications from the St. John's parishioners before 5 June, after those had been met the Tron congregation would hold precedence.

2. C.P., CHA 4.7.63, 9 June 1818, J. Ewing to T. Chalmers.

3. Report of the Proceedings of the Committees appointed by the Incorporations ... (Glasgow, 1818), p. 29.

centre of public controversy from the very beginning.

By June 1818 Chalmers had achieved several things. First, agreement in principle to his parochial plans from an influential group of the Glasgow elite. Secondly, the potential enactment of those plans by a decret of division of the Glasgow parishes which held out the possibility of an alternative system of management run by the individual kirk sessions as opposed to the centralised General Session. Thirdly, a working knowledge of the new parish of St. John's through a number of surveys of its occupants. Lastly, the unanimous consent of the council to his own election as minister of that parish. It looked as if everything was ready for his 'final solution' of poor relief.

There were still some obstacles to be cleared up, however, before Chalmers was finally able to embark upon his scheme. From May 1817 the General Session was encountering severe problems in procuring its subsidy from the Town's Hospital - a subsidy that was vital if its own operations were to continue.¹ The Hospital itself faced increasing expenses as the poor relief expenditure of the city grew, and its project for a new hospital meant it had even fewer resources to fall back upon. It will also be remembered that Chalmers was one of the forty-eight Hospital directors for 1817-18, and so was directly in touch with this situation. Given that it was the General Session's system of centralised relief that was the main obstacle to Chalmers' scheme of each parish operating its relief separately and independently, he had to ensure that the clause in the decret of disjunction of the nine new city parishes which would enable the

1. By 1818 the General Session needed £1,500 from the Hospital to cope with all the city sessional poor. The Hospital grew increasingly reluctant to grant such subsidies: e.g., G.T.H.M., 23 April 1818.

disjunction of his own parish from that corrupt system was in fact realised. The growing tension between the General Session and the Hospital provided the opportunity. Throughout 1819 this tension mounted steadily and resulted in the latter refusing all further financial aid to the Session, and in the consequent surrender by the Session of any control on the poor relief management of the city on 7 October 1819.¹

Although Chalmers himself had ceased to be a director of the Hospital by October 1819, once more his influence can be seen at work. For example, two days before the Hospital committee on the scrutiny of the city poor met to discuss the Session's requests for financial aid, its convenor, Robert Findlay wrote to Chalmers. In this letter of 3 April 1819 he enclosed a full report. He recorded that the committee would probably decide unanimously to recommend that all aid to the Session should cease, and the Hospital should negotiate with each individual session if they, the sessions, ever ran into financial difficulties. The inevitable result would be the General Session splitting up into its component parts as regards poor relief.² On 22 June Findlay wrote once more to Chalmers telling him of the unanimous approval of the above resolution by the directors. He also congratulated Chalmers:

... on the revolution of sentiment, which has in the course of a short year been wrought among the Managers on this subject.³

This would indicate that a change in the entire sessional poor relief system, not just St. John's, was largely due to Chalmers using all his influence with the various governors of the Hospital and town council. He did try to influence the General Session also and win it

1. G.S.M., 7 September, 7 October 1819.

2. St.A.U.L. MS. 30385. 314, 3 April 1819, R. Findlay to T. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 4.11.34, 22 June 1819, R. Findlay to T. Chalmers.

over to his views, but that body remained adamant in its opposition.¹ Made up of ministers and representative elders, it was not just acting out of spite or anger at having its power usurped. On the contrary, it set out some very sound reasons against Chalmers' scheme for the nine city parishes operating independantly of one another over relief. On 2 September 1819, during the Session's monthly meeting, the arrangements were discussed for a new redistribution of the collections of the nine parishes. They worked out what the situation would be like with and without the inclusion of the estimated St. John's collection. If, as under the old practice, St. John's sent its collection along with the other eight parishes, then the Session would have £2,267 to divide among 1,259 paupers, providing a monthly allowance averaging 2/9d. each. If St. John's withdrew, then although the total number of paupers would fall by 125 or one tenth to 1,134, the total fund would fall by £416 or almost one fifth to £1,851, averaging 2/6d. to each pauper.² They agreed with Chalmers' disapproval of any assessment system, but considered that in a city where great inequalities of wealth existed from district to district, it would be unfair not to equalise first of all the income of each parish, and then let each parish "by vigilance and prudent economy" maintain its poor without an assessment.³

Yet despite this apparently logical drawback to Chalmers' scheme, the council had already given it final, unanimous approval on 18 August 1819. On that date Chalmers wrote to the council reminding

1. C.P., CHA 4.13.7, 17 August 1819, C.S.Parker to T. Chalmers; CHA 3.1.4, 12, 17 August 1819, H. Tennent to T. Chalmers. Both men wrote that they would speak to any members of the General Session that they knew and try to gain support from them for Chalmers.

2. G.S.M., 2 September 1819.

3. Ibid., 2 and 7 September 1819.

it of its apparent agreement to the principles he had set out in his letter to Ewing of May 1818. He also added two requests: that he be allowed to use his expected surplus collections for the education of his parishioners, and that in the long term, although not pressing for it immediately, he hoped a law of residence would be established between the Glasgow parishes. He also reserved for St. John's the right to claim from any general public fund raised in the city during times of "sudden and unlooked for depression."¹ The Council duly used the two clauses in the decret of division that allowed St. John's to have control of its own collections, to distribute those autonomously to its poor and to use the surplus for education. Although this motion only referred to St. John's directly, it resulted in all the kirk sessions becoming independent since at the same time the General Session's subsidy from the Hospital was withdrawn and its protest over the St. John's arrangements were ignored. The Session concluded that:

... the present system of the management of the poor and of their funds, by different bodies liable to interfere with one another, is inexpedient and ought to be discontinued.²

The result of these events was the abdication by the General Session of all of its powers to the Provost, magistrates and Hospital directors. Although a quarter of the latter continued to be drawn from the the Session, this decision in effect meant that the vast bulk of official public relief in Glasgow was controlled mainly by secular officials. Each kirk session now had to negotiate independently with the Hospital if its relief funds (from its collections) were inadequate to the needs of its sessional poor. As has been seen, in St. John's it was intended that no negotiations would be necessary, all of its new poor being funded by its evening parochial collections,

1. G.B.R., 18 August 1819.

2. Ibid., 27 October 1819: recorded minute of the General Session meeting of 7 October 1819.

and so in time, as the old poor died off, becoming completely independent of the legal assessment fund. It was up to the other eight parishes individually to decide how they would cope with their poorer inhabitants, and so a final assessment of this change in the administration of Glasgow's poor relief must await a review of those parishes in chapter six. For the moment, suffice it to say that if they did decide to draw upon the assessment their bargaining power was that much weaker. As had been demonstrated in 1819 with the General Session the Hospital had the power to withdraw its financial support or dictate its applications as it wished, and so any dependence of the individual sessions on the assessment fund meant in effect that the ecclesiastical provision of relief in Glasgow was virtually nil. On the other hand, if they did remain independent, and, like St. John's. all supported all of their poor from their collections, then the Hospital would become superfluous. The latter never happened, and so in that sense Chalmers' system for Glasgow as a whole obviously failed. It would rather seem to have brought the city that step nearer towards a total secular supervision of its relief funds, or at least the bulk of those funds.

It might be wondered why the town council was unanimous in its final support for Chalmers' scheme, even given the support of many of its influential members. The answer seem to lie in the general situation of Glasgow. The city was reaching near desperation as regards its poor. A solution that appeared to have the unshakeable belief of such an influential propounder and which held out the prospect of drastic reduction and the eventual abolition of a burdensome tax was attractive in itself. Perhaps as important was the

prospect of Chalmers staying in Glasgow and continuing to preach his particular brand of evangelicalism which included an unequivocal assertion of the duty of the masses to be loyal.¹ It was surely no coincidence that Chalmers' letter of 18 August 1819 asking for a final sanction of his scheme came in the middle of a discussion in the council about the necessity of some sort of measure to relieve the rapidly increasing numbers of poor, and against the background of unrest and disquiet in the country as a whole.

For Chalmers himself, the way ahead was now clear. Yet, as in 1817 the offer of a post in Stirling had spurred on his supporters to greater efforts to keep him in Glasgow by accommodating his wishes, so in 1819 a similar event occurred. It concerned the vacant chair of Natural Philosophy at Edinburgh University and the announcement that Chalmers was a candidate for it.² Whatever the reasons behind Chalmers' part in this affair, it contributed yet another controversial point. Thus the initial establishment of the St. John's experiment was itself preceded by a mass of publicity. This was to place even more pressure on Chalmers to prove that he was right. He was to use statistics, testimonies and numerous pages of text to establish that proof. One wonders if he ever allowed for a second the possibility that he might be wrong. It will be seen in the next chapter that this pressure on Chalmers to prove himself led to serious gaps in his evidence. It is now time to turn to the experiment itself, and to examine its initiation and early development.

1. For example, C.P., CHA 4.12.33, 14 August, 1819, J. MacKenzie to T. Chalmers. James MacKenzie was a brother of Daniel MacKenzie, the town councillor. He wrote to Chalmers to say that the weavers in Glasgow were quiet then, but would benefit from Chalmers being in St. John's pulpit, that is to say they would be kept in check.

2. C.P., CHA 4.14.15, 27 August 1819, R. Tennent to T. Chalmers. Some of the town council considered that Chalmers used his candidacy to exert pressure on them to agree to the St. John's plans. They were indignant at this, since they were favourable towards the latter anyway.

CHAPTER FOUR: Chalmers and St. John's, 1819-23: "A Moral Police".¹

The streets of Glasgow certainly exhibit as noisy and disorderly a populace, as almost any place I have visited. The vicinity of the Tontine, since I have been here, has been the seat of many public brawls. These irregularities are, doubtless, to be ascribed to the great number of people that flock to this spot to obtain employment, either in the manufactories, the collieries, or along the river. But in no place, perhaps, is there more intelligence and enlightened zeal employed in the public good. Many of the evils are ascribed by Doctor Chalmers and other judicious men, to the influence of the poor laws; but with how much reason, I cannot pretend to decide. In other parts of Scotland, where no such provisions exist, there is said to be an exemption from a large share of the poverty and consequent disorder which are here felt.²

The above description of Glasgow was written by an American visitor, John Griscom, in 1819. In this account of the city, Griscom appeared to have captured the mood of some of its inhabitants. It was a time of anxiety and distress, disturbance and unease, and yet the city fathers and the responsible middle classes were active and confident that all might still turn out well. In this context, Chalmers' work in St. John's was something that could be both observed and pointed to. More importantly perhaps, it gave the opportunity to actually do something.

The official kirk session records for the St. John's parish opened on 4 June 1819, with the appointment by the Glasgow Presbytery of twelve former Tron elders to the St. John's session, and with Chalmers as their moderator.³ The year preceding this meeting had witnessed a concentrated programme of preparation by Chalmers and his closest associates. The end result of this activity was the division of the parish into twenty-five districts/'proportions', and the

1. W. Keddie, Memorials of St. John's Congregation (Glasgow, 1874), p.10.

2. Griscom, J., A Year in Europe comprising a journal of observations in England, Scotland, Ireland, France, the north of Italy and Holland. In 1818 and 1819 (New York, 1823), vol. 1, p. 416, 2 April 1819.

3. S.R.O., CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 1819-36, 4 June 1819. For a list of these twelve see above, p. 77, footnotes 3 and 4.

conducting of an individual survey of each of those areas. So organised was this preparatory work, a bound survey of the parish was presented to Chalmers in 1819 by his helpers, with a printed geographical description and a summary of the parish's demographic composition.¹ (See map, page 130).

It was immediately apparent that a daunting task awaited Chalmers and his supporters. St. John's was an amalgam of parts of three other parishes - the Tron, the Outer High, and the Inner High. In the resulting parish of over 10,000 souls, the largest of Glasgow's nine parishes, less than one third of them had seats in St. John's itself.² From the point of view of evangelisation alone, the task ahead was an enormous one. This indeed was similar in immensity to the problems Chalmers had faced on his arrival in the Tron. Yet little of the depression and frenzy of the early Tron period were apparent in Chalmers' first writings in St. John's. In that sense it might be said that his social vision had fired him with a zeal that had ironically deserted the country pastor set on converting the masses after his first taste of city parish life. His close associates obviously felt the power of this renewed energy. As early as 1818, when Chalmers was beginning to mobilise all his resources for his coming campaign in St. John's, at least one of those associates stated an impression that Chalmers was later at great pains to deny:

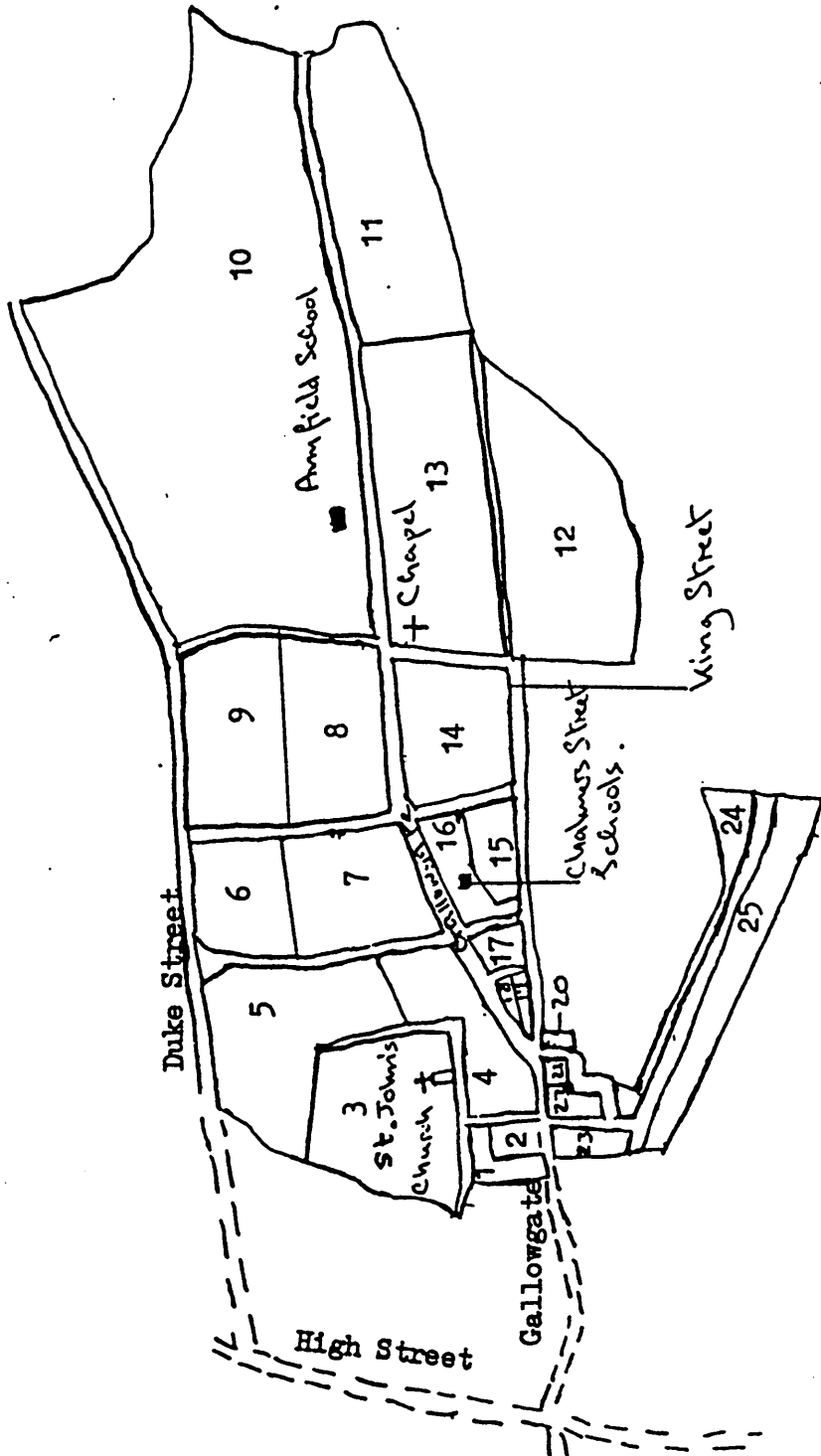
I am convinced the work will neither acquire Extent nor General Energy throughout its Extent, without your being Personally at the head of it.³

1. C.P., CHA 5.1.14, 'Statistical, moral and educational survey of St. John's Parish, 1819' (hereafter 'Statistical Survey'); CHA 5.1.16, 'Description of the Proportions of St. John's Parish, 1819-20' (hereafter 'Description of St. John's, 1819-20').

2. C.P., CHA 5.1.16, 'Description of St. John's, 1819-20', p.3. The actual population was 10,304; J. Cleland, The Rise and Progress of the City of Glasgow (Glasgow, 1829), p. 288.

3. St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.300, 1 August 1818, P. Falconer to T. Chalmers.

St. John's Parish, Glasgow: 1819.¹



1. Based on S.R.O., RHP 433, Map of the Barony Parish and
Royalty of Glasgow, 1822, by James Cleland.

True, Chalmers' renewed ardour was partly due to the fact that he believed his poor relief programme would indeed set himself and his elders free to carry out the primary work of spiritual conversion that in 1815 had called him to Glasgow. In his letter to Ewing printed in the 1818 Town's Hospital Report Chalmers stated that his main aim was to bring "the lessons of Christianity" to his parishioners, and if his poor relief programme was not accepted he asked for his kirk session to be disassociated entirely from poor relief.¹ Once that relief programme had been sanctioned, however, it was its proper establishment that was vital in these early stages. Interestingly enough, after it had been set in motion, the disgruntled Chalmers of the mid-Tron years once more became apparent. As he himself recorded in his diary in February 1822 :

Begin to feel again the fatigue and the sore vexation of Glasgow.
O my God may I be still - and do my work as thy servant.²

In January 1823 he accepted a university appointment at St. Andrews with all too obvious relief and pleasure. It would seem that he was never at home with the soul of the city populace he had tried so hard to liberate by his practical, methodical systems.

Chalmers' published works during his period in St. John's reflected his overriding concern with the social experiment in the parish. In 1820 a volume of sermons appeared on The Application of Christianity to the Commercial and Ordinary Affairs of Life, later known as The Commercial Discourses. This largely consisted of

1. J. Ewing, Report for the Directors of the Town's Hospital of Glasgow. (Glasgow 1818), pp. 219-220.

2. C.P., CHA 6.1,9, Journal, vol. 6, 18 February 1822, Chalmers was also telling his close friends that he needed a quieter, literary position: CHA 4.22.1, 16 November 1822, F. Nicholl to T. Chalmers; 4.25.58, 6 January 1823, Rev. W. Ferrie to T. Chalmers.

public sermons preached at the end of 1817 and in 1818 in his allotted Thursday afternoons in the Tron. They repeated the tone of the Astronomical Discourses mentioned above in their concern to relate the Christian man to the modern world of commerce and industry as typified in Glasgow.¹ Once more he was at pains to point out the continuity of man's nature through different economic ages.

It was in this volume of sermons that Chalmers repeated more emphatically his earlier assertions that the only cure for society's current problems of unrest and strife was the conversion of all to Christianity. As well as bringing civil peace, this would effect a solution in the realm of poverty and its relief, since the Christian rich would be bountiful but discerning, and the Christian poor would:

... wish for no more than what a Christian ought to wish for; let him work and endure to the extent of nature's sufferance, rather than beg - and only beg, rather than that he should starve.²

As a corollary of this, a Christian society would be peaceful and orderly, living in brotherly love and peace. This was the only sure way to achieve such a state. The abolition of rank, or any current radical or revolutionary ideas would all ultimately fail. Bearing in mind the general industrial strife and political unrest leading to the 'Radical War' in Glasgow in 1820, and to such incidents as Peterloo, the Spa Fields riots, and the Cato Street Conspiracy throughout the rest of Britain,³ it was apparent that once more Chalmers' support of law and order and the status quo was being reinforced by a common

1. See above, pp. 75-6.

2. T. Chalmers, Commercial Discourses, C.W., vol. 6, sermon five, p. 120.

3. E.J. Hobsbawm, Industry and Empire (p. b., Suffolk, 1972), refers to "waves of desperation" breaking out at different times all over Britain as the impact of industrialisation made itself felt, p. 94; T.C. Smout, A History of the Scottish People, 1560-1830 (p.b.), Suffolk, 1973), describes the Radical War and its outcome as the beginnings of an identity of political interest amongst the Scottish labour force, p. 419.

reaction and panic at such threats to civil peace. His remedy remained the same: the general and Christian education of all.¹

Yet once more the tension inherent in Chalmers' social and religious ideas was apparent in this volume of sermons. He had argued previously, and was to continue to do so, that the key for the success of his social experiment, and the factor that would make its achievement so simple, lay in man's natural, social inclinations.² However, in his sermons the conversion of man was pointed to as the most effective and guaranteed method of achieving this. If all were Christian, the argument ran, then "the work of benevolence would with ease and harmony be carried out".³ The ambiguity of this dual stance was still apparent as he embarked on the St. John's experiment. He wanted to use the latter both to prove the feasibility and facility with which man's natural instincts would make him self-sufficient no matter what economic stage society was in, and as a tool to enable the Christian conversion of its population. Interestingly, all his works after 1820 in which he 'proved' the success of St. John's all concentrated on the poor relief side. He never offered any proof that St. John's was not only the most economically and morally sufficient parish in Glasgow, but also the most Christian.

Chalmers spent three and a half years in St. John's. During that time he established his parochial machinery for both facets of the

1. T. Chalmers, Commercial Discourses, C.W., vol. 6, sermon 15, "The Importance of Civil Government to Society", pp. 340-377.

2. For example, see above, pp. 97-8.

3. T. Chalmers, Commercial Discourses, C.W., vol. 6, sermon five, p. 130.

task ahead, the moral and spiritual development of its population. Elders and sabbath school teachers were to spearhead the spiritual attack, deacons and secular teachers were to effect the material well being of the inhabitants by conducting them back into a pure, natural and self-sufficient state. His first printed works describing the results of this parochial machinery took the form of regular quarterly pamphlets, printed by the new publishing house he himself had financed under the name of Chalmers and Collins.¹ His brother Charles and his trusted friend and elder from the Tron and St. John's William Collins, were at the head of the new publishers and printers. Anxious to sell his scheme in Glasgow, the rest of Scotland and in England, he began to write voraciously.

The title of these first works on the St. John's experiment and the economic and social theories behind it was The Christian and Civic Economy of Large Towns. Begun in September 1819, by 1826 it had grown into three volumes of text. Once more, the continuous development of Chalmers' theories was apparent. Indeed, Chalmers' contemporaries also recognised this growth and did not consider his ideas as static. In 1822, one year after the first volume had appeared, the Earl of Elgin wrote to tell Chalmers that Peel hoped Chalmers would visit him in London. Elgin had told Peel that Chalmers had met his predecessor in the Home Office, Lord Sidmouth, in 1817, "although your

1. Chalmers' decision to establish his brother and Collins in the printing business was partly to find something for Charles to do, but largely the result of a strange quarrel he had with John Smith. The quarrel started because Chalmers believed Smith was not promoting his works properly but it snowballed to the extent that both men had legal representatives. The affair is documented in the Chalmers Papers, CHA 5.3.1 - 5.5.234. Unfortunately, the result of the dispute is not known, but the Smith family did continue to help out in St. John's parish, as they had in the Tron.

ideas on pauperism were at that time less matured".¹

In the first volume of The Christian and Civic Economy, Chalmers concentrated on elaborating his plan for reclaiming the large towns which had outgrown the Church of Scotland's parochial structure. Existing parishes should be divided into the equivalent of small country parishes through a network of local sabbath teachers, elders and ordinary teachers, visiting each district alongside the minister, and drawing rich and poor together in social harmony. The resulting "parochial system" would facilitate the creation of independent, decentralised parishes, each drawing its congregation from its parishioners. The latter, he argued, should have more say in the patronage of the parish, or at least those wealthy enough to help provide new churches for this parochial system.²

In this first volume, Chalmers also gave a general outline of the ideal poor relief management within this parochial system. To remove the ministers and elders from the taint of poor relief administration, deacons should be appointed and placed in charge of the church door collections. The latter were to be applied to all "new" cases of pauperism, and the assessment should continue for the "old" poor, that is prior to the new system, which would die out "in a few years". Sessional relief would be minimal. Nature would supply the deficiency. He stressed that it was not Christianity that

1. C.P., CHA, 4.20.19, 9 September 1822, earl of Elgin to T. Chalmers.

2. T. Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 1, C.W., vol. 14, pp. 25-71, 92-3, 119, 133, 139-141, 208-9, 250. At this stage, Chalmers believed the liberality of the rich, once freed from contributing to poor relief, would be sufficient to provide all the necessary schools and churches for the extended towns. By the 1830's he was to change his mind, and believed Government funding was necessary for both: pp. 165, 168.

would effect this natural charity, although it would "sweeten and accelerate" the process. However, it was not indispensable. As soon as compulsory assessment was abolished, sympathy and "rills" of relief would automatically emerge as the laws of human nature re-established themselves. Here he developed his description of these four "natural fountains" from his Edinburgh Review articles of 1817 and 1818: a man's own work; the help of relations; the beneficence of the rich; and the goodwill of neighbours.¹ Christianity did help the process, and provided an "overpassing sufficiency" to nature. Not that it was necessary for all to be actually converted for this influence to take effect:

The sound Christian economy that regenerates the few for heaven, reforms the many into the frugality, and the industry, and the relative duty, and all the other moralities which stand allied with self-respect and decency of character upon earth.²

The best solution was for a good Christian economy and the decline of pauperism to go hand in hand.

In the second volume of this work, published in 1823, Chalmers described his practical experiment based on these theories of a "retracing process" to conduct Scottish parishes back to their relief system. He avowed that such a process should be gradual, but in Scotland it would also be brief. In fact it would take only five years, the average time for the "old" paupers to die off. The aim of the process was a purely voluntary system of relief, all official pauperism being funded out of the voluntary church collections, and, he avowed, it was possible for all Scottish parishes to accomplish this. Indeed, eventually there should be no paupers. Sessional relief would ultimately cease, and each kirk session would act as only another benevolent individual relieving those closest to

1. Ibid., pp. 268, 400-412.

2. Ibid., p. 414.

it, its congregation as opposed to all parishioners. He also stressed that the products of immoral behaviour (primarily illegitimate and deserted children) should not be relieved, but should be cared for by kin and neighbours, and so perhaps deter parents from the initial crime. However, the physically and mentally ill could and should be safely relieved out of public funds - aid to such could not demoralise since the afflictions were not blameworthy.¹

The description of the St. John's experiment in the second volume of The Christian and Civic Economy was one where unqualified success was already apparent in 1823, according to Chalmers. Despite being one of the poorest and most populous parishes, he claimed it had thrived under the new regime. The conditions of that regime he set out as follows. First of all, St. John's was cut off from the centralised general Session and Town's Hospital relief system. Any paupers from the geographical area that comprised St. John's who had staked their claims for relief before 1819 were guaranteed the continuation of that relief: in other words, those on the Town Hospital lists of pensioners, and those on sessional relief from the three parishes out of which St. John's parish had been carved. The Hospital poor would still receive their pensions from that body, that is, from the general assessment. The former sessional poor from the three composite parishes would be relieved by the new St. John's session, out of the Sabbath day collections. The distribution of the latter remained in the hands of the elders. Thus so far, there was nothing new in these arrangements, and Chalmers made it clear that the position of any current official paupers at the outset of the experiment was safeguarded. He wanted to demonstrate how

1. Ibid., vol. 2, C.W., vol. 15. pp. 45 - 47, 103, 105, 108, 117, 122, 128-133.

scrupulously fair his methods were, arguing that the numbers of such "old"¹ sessional and Hospital poor were irrelevant and should not be considered as part of his scheme, since old age and a better economic climate in Glasgow should eventually eliminate them.

The success of the scheme was thus dependent upon the 'new' poor - those individuals from St. John's parish admitted on to official relief after 1819. As has been seen, in Glasgow there were two forms of such official public relief: that received from the Hospital, which formed the major part, and was provided for by the general legal assessment, and that proffered by the individual sessions, funded by the voluntary church collections. Chalmers' scheme was simple: all relief from the Hospital would cease in St. John's. This was easy to accomplish since it will be remembered that to apply for such relief a person had to be recommended by an elder. The St. John's elders were simply told never to do so. The only official source of relief in the parish was to come from the session. This relief was to be administered by Chalmers' "new" set of agents, the deacons, and was to be funded out of the evening collections.² The evening Sabbath sermons were specifically aimed at the poor parochial congregation, as opposed to the wealthy day congregation that Chalmers attracted from all over the city. Therefore, the funds at the deacons' disposal would be minimal - in the region of £80 a year as opposed to £400 from the morning collections - and would also be parochial in origin. This

1. Chalmers used the term "old" poor throughout his writings on St. John's to designate those people from the geographical area of St. John's parish, who had become sessional or Hospital paupers before the parish itself was created and its poor relief system put into operation.

2. Chalmers had planned this part of the experiment in 1818, see above, pp. 118-9.

was important since Chalmers also wanted to demonstrate that his system centred on the poor helping each other as opposed to relying on wealthy benefactors from outside their local neighbourhood.¹

Chalmers proceeded to describe the role of the new deacons. Each deacon was allocated one of the twenty-five proportions. Their task was to become acquainted with the inhabitants of their area, so arming themselves with practical information if any parishioner applied to them for relief. Chalmers set out a "Directory of Procedure" for the deacons in the event of such applications. First of all, the deacon had to inquire as to the possibility of the suppliant being able to do any work at all for himself, and so perhaps not in fact needing any extra help, or less help than might at first sight appear necessary. Secondly, he had to find out whether the applicant's relatives and friends might be willing to give any aid. The next step was to ascertain whether he or she was a Dissenter, and if so whether his/her own session might afford some relief. If, after all this it was considered that some official relief from St. John's was still necessary, the deacon was obliged to ensure that the suppliant had been resident in Glasgow for three years, and was not receiving relief from the Hospital or from any other parish. It was usual to try a small temporary issue of relief, at first, as opposed to being immediately made a regular and official pauper.² If the latter did in the end prove necessary, a second deacon had to go through all the above steps and confirm the conclusions of the first.

1. T. Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 2, C.W., vol. 15, pp 60-61.

2. In this issue of temporary relief as a means of preventing permanent legal pauperism, Chalmers was repeating his methods of Kilmany (see above, p. 41). His belief that this was a very useful and effective expedient was echoed in the St. John's Session Minutes for secular affairs, 1819-25 (S.R.A., CH2/176.8), p. 73, 2 May 1825.

This was then put forward at a meeting of all the deacons. The applicant himself had to be present at such a meeting, where, if his claims were accepted, he would be formally "received upon the fund".¹

Chalmers then stated that the people of St. John's parish agreed with this procedure, and admired its "frankness" so much that by 1823 the number of applications had dropped by four-fifths.² Yet, given the deacon's instructions, the end result of few applications was hardly surprising in itself. The rigorous investigation and strict instructions not to give relief would deter, as was indeed the intention. What was of greater importance, if Chalmers' contentions on the operation of a pure natural relief system were correct, was whether those who under the "corrupt" Hospital/General Session system would have been awarded official relief more easily, were indeed catered for by Chalmers' alternative, natural sources. Did people try to do more for themselves and look to their neighbours and relations? Were there in fact very few people who were so bereft of all personal and relative sources of help that their poverty had to be turned into pauperism? Did Chalmers' "moral" solution and the proofs he proffered for it in fact show not only that such pauperism had almost disappeared, but also that poverty had been dealt with, as he claimed it would?

The facts of few applications under the new regime in St. John's and of little being spent on official poor relief, in themselves prove

1. T. Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 2, C.W., vol. 15, pp. 66, Directory of Procedure for Deacons.

2. Ibid., p. 63.

little. For Chalmers' whole point had been that the secret, natural springs of benevolence would flow once more in this purified city parish. Yet in these printed works he did not include extensive descriptions of examples of such springs of human kindness. There is also tantalisingly little evidence of the reactions of the St. John's parishioners. Certainly Chalmers himself did not publish any massive dossier of case histories at this stage.

Another important factor missing from Chalmers' statements was any analysis of the extent of private charity in the parish. Cleland had pointed out as early as 1816 that the vast bulk of charity in Glasgow (7/8 ths) originated from private charitable societies, as opposed to the official Hospital and sessional relief.¹ Chalmers was vehement in his opposition to such societies and to all public charity, except for disease and education, as generators of the problems they sought to solve. Yet Chalmers never dealt with their role, if any, in St. John's, nor enquired into the extent of their activities. True, if a St. John's parishioner received relief from such a society he would be excluded from sessional relief, but since the latter was given out so sparingly and the pensions were small, that would hardly be a deterrent, one would assume, from soliciting aid from private charitable societies, especially when it is borne in mind that Cleland maintained that the latter gave ten times more relief throughout the city of Glasgow than the Hospital and sessions combined. By ignoring this area in the sense of inquiring into its impact on St. John's, Chalmers left a large gap in his "proofs".

1. See above, p. 56.

Chalmers made two other public statements about his poor relief experiment before he left Glasgow in 1823. The first was in a speech before the General Assembly, the second was in the form of a pamphlet summarising his experiences in poor relief in Glasgow since his arrival in 1815. In the first of these, he did describe some individual cases of poverty and their relief from natural sources in the parish as opposed to sessional relief. In some notes added at the end of his printed speech, he gave four examples of families that would probably have received official sessional or Hospital relief under the corrupt Glasgow system, but which did not receive any such relief in St. John's. Rather, in all four cases, the secret natural relief given was far greater than any official relief.¹ Chalmers used these four cases to illustrate his point that although the wealth and benevolence of the rich was necessary and welcome for the provision of education,

... there is meanwhile a spirit and a capability among the poor wherewith it is easy to ward off the scarcely inferior mischief of a corrupt and degrading pauperism.²

Thus, it was not just the giving that was important, the actual money or food donated, but rather the source of the relief and the way in which it was given. Both of these needed to be strictly

1. T. Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 3, C.W., vol. 16, Appendix 1, "A Speech delivered on the 24th May 1822, before the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, explanatory of the measures which have been successfully pursued in St. John's Parish, Glasgow, for the extinction of its compulsory pauperism", pp. 145-216. These four cases consisted of an old weaver whose family had typhus; an old man, too aged to work; a mother and daughter, both suffering from cancer; and the abandoned child of a convict. In other words, four apparently desperate cases of need.

2. Ibid., p. 190.

controlled. One of the four cases described here - of a woman and her daughter, both suffering from cancer - received help from their neighbours as opposed to the parish, and so received some "moral sunshine" with the food, drink and general help.¹ It is essential to realise this concern of Chalmers' with the relationship between giver and receiver. If the right one were established, his argument ran, then it would be the key to peace, stability, self-sufficiency, morality, and, finally, an aid to the Christianisation of the masses. In this light, however, four examples are not much to base such an important theory upon. Given Chalmers' attention to detail in his writings, and his habit in his sermons of giving repeated examples to illustrate his points, one does begin to wonder why he did not provide a massive dossier of case histories illustrating his four natural fountains of relief. The absence of such examples means a large body of the proof of his experiment is based on Chalmers' own word. This must be kept in mind when reviewing his other "evidence".

Chalmers himself provided the most damning information against there having ever been full knowledge among his parish workers of the precise extent of any natural relief released outwith the sessional system. This came in his final piece of printed writing during his incumbency in St. John's in 1823. The aim of this statement was two fold. First of all, to convince once and for all any opponents and doubters of his system that their arguments were unfounded. Secondly, to inspire his own team of workers to continue after he left and to encourage other Glasgow citizens to join them. In pursuit of this second aim, he added a printed "testimony" from twenty-two of his

1. Ibid.

deacons.¹ This testimony took the form of answers from the individual deacons to questions Chalmers had sent them concerning the size of their proportions, the number of paupers they contained, the number of applications for relief they received, and the time they had to spend on their duties. These answers reveal that by 1823 there was on average only five applications for relief per proportion over the year, and that the time spent on investigating such cases was negligible.² Only one deacon actually stated that over and above the time he spent on cases brought to him, he spent one hour a week "to investigate into the state of the poor".³ In addition, ten out of the twenty-two deacons said that they procured work for people in their districts, although no exact figures for the amount of work so provided were given.

In support of his primary aim of finally convincing the doubters, Chalmers, by 1823, was able to offer some facts and figures that were indeed startling. He claimed that, under the normal system of Glasgow poor relief, St. John's would have cost the city approximately £1,400, or one-tenth of its annual expenditure on poor relief. He repeated his assertions of the general poverty of his parish, using as proof the low number of household servants and the small contribution of its inhabitants to the city's assessment fund. He then went on to

1. *Ibid.*, Appendix 2, "Statement in Regard to the Pauperism of Glasgow from the Experience of the Last Eight Years", pp. 241-261.

2. The time spent by the deacons on the poor varied from two hours monthly to one hour every five months, and most stated that this constituted the total time spent by them in their districts, both on the few applications (which ranged from none to twelve a year), and in any other parochial visiting or deacons' meeting.

3. *Ibid.*, p, 246, deacon number five.

demonstrate how his system had operated on a very small budget producing a minimal number of paupers, and argued that any parish had the capabilities of copying this.¹

In setting out his statistics he first of all repeated his earlier descriptions of the scheme, and explained that the burden of proof lay on the number of new poor, admitted after September 1819, and the ability of the evening congregation to support that poor out of their average annual collections of £80. The scheme had begun under an industrial cloud, with the severe economic distress of 1819-20, and Chalmers here admitted that his parishioners were able to apply to the general public subscription collected in Glasgow at that time. He gave no figures for the number who in fact did so, but did add that, under duress he had also set up a soup kitchen in St. John's to show that his parishioners were being as fairly treated as the rest of the city. Apparently, few would use the tickets for free soup, holding its charity in contempt. In all, only £20 was spent on it. From then on, the figures presented an impressive success story. Over the entire period, 1819-1823, there were only twenty regular paupers admitted onto the deacon's poor roll, at a cost of £66 6s. 0d. a year. In other words, well within the £80 the deacons had at their disposal.²

Chalmers did not at this stage give any figures for relief to occasional or casual poor, yet it has already been seen in the Directory of Procedure for the deacons that such aid was admissable and indeed preferable to making applicants permanent pensioners on the funds. Chalmers indeed acknowledged at one point in this statement that such occasional relief had been distributed by the deacons, but

1. Ibid., pp. 218-20.

2. Ibid., pp. 223-225.

gave no statistical record for it in his financial account. It will be seen from the kirk session records, that this type of relief was made use of, and that Chalmers' untypical lack of detail about it could be interpreted as being deliberately misleading on his part.

Chalmers went on to make his arrangements even more convincing as regards the ease with which any parish, no matter how small its income, could adequately cope with pauperism, and by implication poverty, using his methods. He repeated that all cases of crippling diseases such as the blind, the deaf and dumb, and lunatics and all cases of poverty arising from crime, such as illegitimate and deserted children, should be afforded no public relief whatsoever. If this were applied in St. John's, the numbers of official poor would drop from twenty to thirteen, at a cost of £32 a year.¹

The undoubted success of the St. John's system, Chalmers argued, was also demonstrated by the fact that in March 1822, it had taken over the expense of the old Hospital poor. By 1823 the number of the latter had fallen from one hundred and forty-nine to thirty-four, at a cost of £90 a year, which was provided out of the surplus of the day collections on the Sabbath. This surplus was the result of the numbers of old sessional poor also having fallen dramatically from 117 to 57, the cost falling from £225 to £152, as Chalmers had predicted, and so the parish income of £570 for 1823 was far in

1. Ibid, pp. 226,237.

excess of its total poor relief expenditure of £308.¹ Chalmers hastened to add, however, that this arrangement was outside the original scheme, and that any parish contemplating the system need only concern itself with providing relief for new paupers, those admitted onto its roll after Chalmers' criteria of scrutiny and the entire moral network had been set in motion.

Chalmers gave even less space in this work to the condition of those applicants for relief who were turned away by the St. John's deacons. That was not his stated object in this piece of evidence, and he did not spend much time away from his main theme of the financial viability of the scheme as a whole. He did suggest that even general indigence - of which there were only the thirteen cases that required official help in St. John's - might safely be left entirely to the operation of man's natural sympathies. He deduced this from the fact that all the other needs in the parish were being amply catered for from the latter source, and in all probability it could be stretched to provide for these thirteen cases as well.²

The second main point of the 1823 Statement was to demonstrate that the whole system did not need a complex and time-consuming organisation to work effectively. On the contrary, it was easily run

1. Ibid., pp. 228-9, 233. Chalmers stated that the number of Hospital poor had fallen through deaths, and that the current thirty-four were old and would also soon die. However, the kirk session records reveal that after a scrutiny of their individual circumstances, the St. John's deacons removed some of the Hospital poor prior to taking them on the session roll: St. John's Minutes, secular affairs, 1819-25 (S.R.A., CH2/176.8, 4 March 1822). Figures for parish income from J. Cleland, Letter to His Grace the Duke of Hamilton and Brandon, respecting the parochial Registers of Scotland (Glasgow, 1834), p. 40 (hereafter Letter to His Grace).

2. T. Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 3, C.W., vol. 16, Appendix 2, p. 226; on p. 119 Chalmers stated that no one would starve under the natural system.

by the deacons, and indeed could be run by elders if no deacons were available, at a personal cost of little time or money.¹ It is small wonder that Chalmers left St. John's frustrated and annoyed that the whole of Scotland and indeed England, had not already leapt to copy him, given such incontrovertible "facts". By 1823 he was as convinced of his practical position as he had been of his theoretical one of 1819.

Having examined Chalmers' theory and his personal analysis of the early years of the St. John's experiment, it is now time to establish how far the theory and his interpretation of its practice were in fact realised. The surviving correspondence, parochial statements, session records, diaries and recollections have all been examined, and what follows is a comparison of these against what Chalmers himself had written between 1819 and 1823.

There is some surviving statistical evidence of the St. John's finances, outwith Chalmers' own published findings, for these first four years. This evidence is not straightforward, however. Figures for relief disbursements were begun at the beginning of October 1819,² but the deacons themselves were not appointed till January 1820. William Brown (1792-1884), a wealthy oil and colour merchant, was one

1. Ibid., p. 276.

2. C.P., CHA 5.2.19, 'State of Sessional Poor', October 1819 - September 1820'.

of the first of these deacons, and he also acted as their treasurer, reporting some of the figures back to Chalmers.¹ From these sources it is apparent that the deacons were indeed given only the money from the evening collections to meet the needs of any new paupers in their districts. This money was handed over to them by the general kirk session treasurer, the elder John Wilson.² Unfortunately, the 1820 statement from Brown is one of the few documents that dealt exclusively with the deacon's income and expenditure - the deacons court records not having survived. Most of the surviving figures are a collation of both the new and old sessional poor and the remaining Hospital paupers. Figures for the new experiment in isolation, therefore often have to be deduced from the financial statements of the session as a whole, and from other surviving evidence.

The General Session report of July 1819, before the St. John's experiment had begun, stated the total burden of sessional poor in the new parish to be one hundred and twenty-five paupers costing £225 per year.³ By October 1819 this was already down to one hundred and seventeen paupers, and by the end of September 1820 the total was one hundred and thirteen. The sum expended on this group for the year ending September 1820 had indeed been almost £225. Five paupers had

1. For example, C.P., CHA 5.2.37, W. Brown to T. Chalmers, 'State of the different accounts in the books of the Treasurer to the court of Deacons for the year ending 26 September 1820'. W. Brown was apparently known in Glasgow as a St. John's agent "whom Chalmers fired with his own enthusiasm, enlisted, drilled, and led in his great fight with pauperism, vice, and sin", Memoirs and Portraits of One Hundred Glasgow Men (Glasgow, 1886), vol. 1, p. 44.

2. Keddie, W., Memorials of St. John's Congregation, Glasgow, Established and Free (Glasgow, 1874), p. 16.

3. G.S.M., 13 July 1819.

left the parish and nine had died but ten had come in from other parishes, and so the net loss was four.¹

As he made his parochial visitation, Chalmers made lists of all those receiving sessional relief in the parish, and appended them to his personal copy of the printed survey of St. John's. Thus in January 1820 he listed one hundred and eight paupers: sixty-seven widows, twenty-nine women, and twelve men.² This total figure does not tally exactly with the sessional returns of one hundred and seventeen and one hundred and thirteen above, but the number obviously fluctuated from month to month throughout the year as some paupers died and some left or entered the parish. What is more relevant is the type of pauper Chalmers' evidence revealed. That is, of his total of one hundred and eight, 62.03% were widows; and altogether 88.88% were women. It would appear from this that the three previous sessions concerned - the Tron, Outer and Inner High - had indeed stuck to the 'traditional' Scottish principles governing the admission of paupers on their rolls. That is, confining relief to widows, the old and the infirm.

Interestingly, Chalmers also included in these personal notes a breakdown of some of the Town's Hospital poor from St. John's parish in January 1820.³ This was presumably for his personal record, and once more was information gained from his visitation of the parish. Since he argued that the centralised system of relief operated by the Hospital and General Session in Glasgow was creating pauperism, it is relevant to examine his notes on these. He listed

1. C.P., CHA 5.2.19, 'State of Sessional Poor, October 1819 - September 1820'.

2. C.P., CHA 5.1.14, 'Statistical Survey', Chalmers' handwritten notes at back of notebook, dated 17 January 1820.

3. Ibid., Chalmers' handwritten notes, dated 15 January 1820.

fifty-three hospital paupers from St. John's parish: twenty-eight widows, nine couples, six specified spinsters, six women, and four men.¹ In other words, 52.83% were widows, 75.47% were women, and 28.30% were couples or men. This again is interesting. It does not imply that the three parishes had sent large numbers of under-employed or unemployed families to the Hospital for relief. On the surface, indeed, it seems to represent similar groups to the session relief but for whose relief the old sessions had insufficient funds. That is, the three sessions were using the Hospital as a means of extending their own capabilities to cope with the 'traditional' Scottish bare minimum of poverty. As has already been pointed out, however, the poorest part of the Tron parish was not transferred to St. John's, and without a similar breakdown of its sessional and Hospital poor, and for the rest of the St. John's Hospital poor, any such conclusions are incomplete and tentative.

The only other surviving statement of figures from St. John's parish during these early years was recorded in a kirk session record book.² Once more, unfortunately, the numbers for old and new sessional poor were not distinguished, but simply stated as a total. In this statement, it was recorded that by the end of September 1823, the number of old and new paupers - including deaths, imported and exported paupers - was ninety-four, as opposed to the 113 at the end

1. There is some confusion over the way Chalmers noted these Hospital poor. All of the widows are preceded by a woman's name which I have taken to be their maiden name. If that is not what he meant, then the number of cases he noted down was 81 as opposed to 53, but then the proportion of women receiving relief is even greater than I have calculated.

2. S.R.A., CH2/176.8, St. John's Session Minutes, secular affairs, 1819-25. This volume of records is in some respects a copy of the regular kirk session records (S.R.O., CH2/176.1), but on 16 August 1821, p. 18, Chalmers proposed this copy be kept for the secular business of the parish, as opposed to the ecclesiastical. It holds some important information, but unfortunately was not kept after 1825.

of September 1820. Foundlings and lunatics were listed separately, at four and two respectively, giving a total of 100, costing £221 15s. 3d.. Over and above this, there were twenty-five Hospital poor, at a cost of £118 14s. 4d. . The session records also noted £12 13s. 6d. spent on thirty-eight occasional poor, as a measure to prevent "a considerable number of poor from becoming regular cases on the session".¹ Excluding the Hospital poor, since they were an extra burden, this brings the total number of poor in 1823 to 138, and the total spent on regular and occasional poor to £234 8s. 9d. That is, £10 more than was necessary for all the "old" regular poor taken on in 1819.

When these figures are compared to Chalmers' printed account of 1823, and to the figures he gave to the likes of Cleland to compile his statistical tables,² some major discrepancies appear. The total cost given publicly by Chalmers of the old and new poor was similar - that is, £218³ as opposed to £221 above. However, there were huge differences in the total numbers of poor given by Chalmers and those above. For example, in 1823 he stated there were fifty-seven old poor and twenty new poor, giving a total of seventy-seven (including lunatics and deserted children and excluding the Town's Hospital poor).⁴ Yet the session records gave the total as 100. In addition, as has already been pointed out, Chalmers never printed any

1. Ibid., 2 May 1825, p. 73.

2. For example, see J. Cleland, Letter to His Grace, p. 40.

3. T. Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 3, C.W., vol. 16, Appendix 2, p. 233.

4. Ibid., pp. 228-9.

numbers for those receiving occasional relief, although he had strongly recommended such relief and implied it had been given. Thus his total in numbers was seventy-seven - a massive fall of 37.60% from the total of 125 in 1819. The total given in the session records, however, was 138, an increase of thirteen or 10.40% over the 1819 figure.¹

Chalmers' repeated assertion of only twenty new individuals needing sessional relief on a regular basis between 1819 and 1823 begins to look suspect when set against the figures stated above. Even if the thirty-eight occasional paupers are ignored for the moment, there is still a discrepancy of twenty-three between Chalmers' and the session's figures for the old and new regular paupers. This is where the session's not distinguishing between old and new regular paupers is particularly frustrating. In theory, however, the number of old paupers would have at least remained stationary, and was more likely to have fallen as they had died off. The only other explanation would have been a massive influx of sessional poor from other parishes in the city, but none of the sources indicate this ever happened on a scale as large as this. Indeed, if it had, Chalmers would more than likely have made a special point of it, as he did for the later years of the experiment, since it supported even more strongly his argument that the fact that any paupers at all came from the rest of Glasgow into his parish demonstrated that his session was

1. There was also a discrepancy in the figure given for the number of Town's Hospital Poor. Chalmers said there were thirty-four of these at a cost of £90 in March 1823, The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 3, C.W., vol. 16, Appendix 2, p. 233; the secular kirk session records for the year September 1822-September 1823 gave the figure as 25, at a cost of £118 14s. 4d., S.R.A., CH2/176.8, St. John's Session Minutes, secular affairs, 1819-25, 2 May 1825, pp. 75-77.

not as harsh as some suggested.¹ Thus the missing twenty-three paupers were more likely to be new recipients of relief. That relief, however, was the equivalent of only three pounds in the total figures given by Chalmers and the session, and so in effect they do not materially alter Chalmers' assertions that the cost of the new relief was minimal. The dubiety is over the actual numbers of poor that Chalmers maintained had to receive help.

An even greater discrepancy arises when the numbers and cost of casual poor given by the session are added on to their total for the old and new regular poor. In one year alone, 1822-1823, it would appear that thirty-eight individuals had received isolated sums of money from the session to enable them to make ends meet until they could be fully independent again. True the total cost of this relief was very small - £12 13s. 6d. - and, like the missing £3 above, even if not included in his figure of £32 a year for the thirteen "true" new regular paupers, was still within the means of his theoretical small, typical parish. This could mean that in his printed reports on the progress of his experiment during his personal leadership, Chalmers' main intent was to keep the figures as simple, and therefore as persuasive as possible. The kirk session figures for 1822-3 were not recorded in their session book until 1825, but were taken from the deacons' records, which, as has been pointed out, have not survived, and so cannot be checked to ensure any veracity of the sessional account. However, the session set down the figures for 1823-4 at the same time, and those were similar to the previous year's figures.²

1. T. Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 3, C.W., vol. 16, Appendix 2, p. 231. Chalmers had included fourteen "imported" poor in his figure of fifty-seven old poor; in all, fifteen St. John's paupers had left by 1823, and twenty-nine new poor had entered.

2. See below, pp. 198-9.

It is unlikely that two sets of figures would be copied wrongly. This leads one to conclude that either Chalmers was misinformed at the time he went to press, or that he deliberately obscured and suppressed some important facts from his printed accounts. Chalmers' 1823 figures were for March of that year; the kirk session's were for the year ending September 1823. This could account for some of the discrepancies, but still does not explain the exclusion from Chalmers' computations of the number and cost of casual poor. These discrepancies are even more apparent in the summary table below:

TABLE 1

<u>CHALMERS' FIGURES (MARCH 1823)</u>	<u>ST JOHNS' RECORDS (SEPTEMBER 1823)</u>
57 (old poor)	94 (old and new poor)
13 (new poor)	
7 (sick and "immoral" - i.e. deserted and illegitimate children).	6 (foundlings and lunatics)
<u>77</u> (+ 34 Town Hospital poor)	<u>100</u> (+ 25 Town Hospital Poor)
	<u>38</u> (occasional poor)
	<u>138</u>

<u>TOTAL COST,</u> <u>MARCH 1822-MARCH 1823</u>			<u>TOTAL COST</u> <u>SEPTEMBER 1822 - SEPTEMBER 1823</u>		
£	s	d	£	s	d
152	0	0 (old poor)	203	5	5 (old and new)
34	6	0 (new poor)	16	12	4 (lunatics)
32	0	0 (sick and 'immoral')	1	17	6 (foundlings)
<u>218</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>6</u> (occasional)
89	6	0 (Town Hospital poor)	<u>234</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>308</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>118</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>4</u> (Town Hospital poor)
			<u>363</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>

In 1820 a new parish, St. James had been created, which incorporated part of St. John's and in effect removed 19 of the original 117 "old" paupers as well as 2,000 of its population.¹ When this is taken into account, the reason for Chalmers minimising the total numbers receiving any sessional relief becomes apparent. That is, as regards the 138 regular and occasional paupers indicated by the session, then it is apparent that as opposed to the 12.13 paupers per thousand of population in 1819, there was an estimated number of 15.08 per thousand in 1823. In other words, a rise of 24.31%. By not including the occasional recipients of relief, Chalmers' figure of seventy-seven regular paupers, old and new, by 1823, represented a fall of 30.58% to 8.42 per thousand.

I think it is important to distinguish what the statistical figure would be if the number of occasional poor is included, because the whole point of Chalmers' scheme was that the total numbers given relief once the new system operated would inevitably fall to almost zero. This, plus the fact that the "old" poor would gradually die off, meant that in the end his system would lead to a pauper-free society, the poor being taken care of by his four natural fountains of relief. In these first four years this was clearly not the case. True, the total amount spent on the new poor, both regular and occasional, was very small and Chalmers could safely have given a full explanation of the above and pointed out that he was still only spending £32 a year on the thirteen new regular paupers, £34 on the seven whose poverty was due to conditions that he claimed should be

1. J. Cleland, Statistical and Population Tables of Glasgow (Glasgow, 1828), pp. 6-7, gives population of St. John's once the tenth parish of St. James' had been created, as 8,366. By 1833 this had risen to 11,746, J. Cleland. Letter to His Grace, p. 39. This constitutes an average rise of 260 a year. An estimate for St. John's population by the end of 1823 would therefore be 9,146, as opposed to its initial figure of 10,304.

otherwise provided for (crime and disease), and the £12 13s. 6d. on thirty-eight occasional paupers. This was still less than £80 a year. The fact that he did not include all this data could mean one of several things. One, he did not know of it – which is unlikely, given his interest and involvement in the results of the scheme. Secondly, he did not trust his reading public not to be put off nor panic at the number of occasional poor, ignoring their trifling cost, and so not realising that they did not necessarily immediately invalidate his scheme. Lastly, he deliberately suppressed it, knowing it could indeed invalidate his ultimate ideal of a pauper-free society at a time when he was promoting that vision in Scotland and England.¹ After all, 1822-3 was a year when economic prosperity was returning to Glasgow,² and when, as his own deacons testified, work was being found for some of the St. John's parishioners. If after all that, some people still needed sessional hand-outs, albeit small and occasional ones, it meant that the four natural fountains of spontaneous relief were in fact not enough to cope with the necessities of this industrial parish. It certainly seems that even when Chalmers was at the helm, the St. John's experiment did not run as successfully as he would have had us believe.

As has been described above, Chalmers' parochial system was carried into effect by means of agents with specific tasks: the elders, deacons and teachers. The recruitment of elders was

1. For Chalmers' impact on the rest of Scotland and on England see below, pp 313-380.

2. J. Cleland, Statistical and Population Tables of Glasgow (Glasgow, 1828), p. 20: In a town council report of January 1823, it was concluded that the fall in the assessment for poor relief was due to a marked improvement in the industrial and economic situation, employment being readily available and the price of food being low.

apparently not too difficult: by October 1819 there were seventeen for the twenty-five proportions, increasing to twenty-four by November 1821, and remaining at that number throughout Chalmers' incumbency. The occupations of twenty-one of these twenty-four elders are known. Six were described as 'merchants'; four as 'manufacturers'; two as printers (Smith and Collins); two as clerks; one calico printer; one clothlapper; one accountant; one surgeon; one timber merchant; one saddler; and one writer.¹ In other words, they were largely from respectable ranks of the professional and commercial groups. In this they would seem to have been typical of most nineteenth century Church of Scotland parishes.²

As with the elders, the provision of sabbath school teachers seems to have been met with comparative ease. According to Hanna, Chalmers already had forty-one sabbath teachers, but needed to double that in order to cover the whole parish adequately, each small locality having its own class and teacher.³ Nevertheless, forty-one

1. S.R.O., CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 3 June 1819, twelve elders ordained; 24 October 1819, five new elders; 17 June 1821, four new elders; 11 November 1821, three new elders. The six merchants were: John Wilson, John Brown, Robert Brown, James Robertson, Alexander McGregor and David Stow; the four manufacturers: John Kirkland, John McCulloch, James Thomson and Andrew Ramsay; two clerks, George Ord and Robert Wodrow; calico printer, Patrick Falconer; surgeon, Harry Rainey; timber merchant, Alexander McVicar; Saddler, Peter Mirrlees; writer, Matthew Montgomerie; clothlapper, Allan Buchanan; accountant, Henry Paul.

2. For example, see P. Hillis, 'Presbyterianism and Social Class in mid-19th Century Glasgow: A Study of Nine Churches', Journal of Ecclesiastical History, vol. 32 (Jan. 1981), pp. 47-64; I.F. Maciver, 'The Evangelical Party and the Eldership in General Assemblies, 1820-1843', Records of the Scottish Church History Society, vol. 22 (1980), pp. 1-13.

3. Hanna, Memoirs, 2, p. 231. This figures tallies with Chalmers' handwritten notes of forty-two Sabbath school teachers, including four women, C.P., CHA 5.1.14, 'Statistical Survey'.

was an impressive beginning. On examining the minutes of the St. John's Sabbath School Society, however, it becomes apparent that the Society itself was a carry over from the Tron Sabbath School Society.¹ Yet another area where the latter parish lost out on Chalmers' removal. Cleland stated that the St. John's sabbath teachers, as well as the deacons and elders were generally

... young men of religious character and education, chiefly in the middle and upper ranks of life, who also gave their time cheerfully and gratuitously.²

Cleland gave the figure of thirty-five teachers and schools in the parish in June 1819, teaching 11,039 boys and girls. He also maintained that the moral and religious care of their charges was taken very seriously - the absence of any child being followed up by a visit to his or her parents or guardians. This part of the parochial experiment certainly overlapped with the work of the elders and deacons in that some of these two groups also offered their services as teachers. Care was also taken during the parochial visitations to check up about the numbers of children in each apartment, and the numbers of those attending such schools.³ The records of the

1. S.R.A., CH2/176.9, St. John's Sabbath School Society Minute Book, 1816-1842.

2. J. Cleland, Statistical and Population Tables, p. 123.

3. C.P., CHA 5.1.14, 'Statistical Survey': seven elders Robert Brown, James Thomson, Allan Buchanan, John Graham, Joseph Brown, Alexander McGregor and David Stow, and one deacon, William Craig, were named as Sabbath school teachers in Chalmers' handwritten list at the back of this. William Collins was also a sabbath teacher and was their spokesman and organiser in the Tron and St. John's, C.P., CHA 5.2.83, 15 December 1823, W. Collins and Nineteen Teachers of the western district of St. John's Parish to T. Chalmers; Alexander Hope, a deacon, and George Heggie, an elder, were also named as sabbath teachers in Keddie, op. cit., pp. 23, 25. That is, nine deacons and two elders in all. Keddie also named John Allan, a handloom weaver from the Old Light Secession Church as a sabbath teacher, Ibid., p. 30; and Chalmers' cousin, Walter Wood, an antiburgher, was named in Chalmers' list in the 1819 survey. In other words, Chalmers saw no harm in using the help of Dissenters in the propagation of the faith as long as their Christian commitment was high.

sabbath school society certainly suggest this was one area where the enthusiasm and commitment of the agents were applied with some measure of success. Whether that success would be carried over to adulthood as regards church attendance was debatable. Secular education and its provision in St. John's will be considered further on in this chapter.

A good supply of those agents who were the linch-pin of the secular side of Chalmers' parochial set-up, the deacons, proved far more difficult to sustain than the elders or sabbath teachers. The first fourteen were appointed on 3 January 1820. Thirteen of these fourteen served all twenty-five proportions for the bulk of the four years Chalmers was in the parish, one having resigned in November 1820.¹ As a result of a massive recruitment campaign on the eve of his departure eleven more were appointed on the 3 November 1823.² The occupations of eighteen of these twenty-four deacons have been traced. Of those, there were eight merchants, five manufacturers, two surgeons, one doctor, one teacher and one cabinet maker. In other words, like the elders, they were from very respectable social groups.³

1. S.R.O., CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 3 January 1820. These fourteen were: Alexander McGregor, William McAlpine, William Brown, James Playfair, John Sommerville, John McVey, James Sword, Alexander Williamson, Archibald Newbigging, Campbell Nasmith, William Buchanan, David Stow, Robert Kettle and William Craig; C.P., CHA 4.5.16, 7 November 1820, W. Brown to T. Chalmers; in June 1820 when St. James' parish opened, six proportions were disjoined from St. John's. Apparently, this resulted in a redrawing of the boundaries of the remaining 19 proportions to make 25 once more. Unfortunately, no description of these new definitions has survived - see below, p. 240.

2. S.R.O., CH2/176.1, St. John's K.S.R., 3 November 1823.

3. Merchants: William Brown, Archibald Newbigging, Campbell Naismith, James Playfair, Alexander McGregor, Robert Black, James Sword, and Robert Kettle. Manufacturers: William Craig, William Peebles, John McVey, John Sommerville, William Watson. Surgeons: William McAlpine, and James Armour. Doctor: Moses Buchanan. Cabinet-maker: George Heggie. Teacher: David Stow (although listed as a teacher in the session records, Stow was also a silk merchant.).

Chalmers, therefore, left almost a full complement of deacons, but for the bulk of his time in the parish there was a shortage of eleven. Yet Chalmers never once specified such a number in his writings about the scheme, despite the fact that most of his evidence concerning the ease with which his system could be run concentrated on these early years in St. John's. This statistic also poses a glaring question: how did thirteen men, let alone twenty-four, ensure that in a population of first over 10,000 and later 8,366, all had adequate means for survival?

Another area where Chalmers' written testimony is placed under suspicion by the surviving evidence is his assertion of the poverty of the new parish. One of the sources that suggests this was not as great as he made out, is the parochial survey of St. John's. The survey broke down the parochial population into occupational groups. Cage and Checkland have used this information to conclude that 54.4% of the parish labour force was engaged in the textile trade in some manner, and were therefore susceptible to any fluctuations in that market.¹ They use this as a very loose category, however, stating that as well as the 411 weavers, or 18.9% of the work force and those said to be spinners, flax dressers and the like, a number of widows, labourers and others would be engaged in textiles in some way even if they were not specified as having been so in the survey itself. My findings from this source are somewhat different. The most striking thing was the diversity of occupations. An average of nearly one third (31.9%) of the working population of each proportion belonged,

1. R.A. Cage and E.O. Checkland, 'Thomas Chalmers and Urban Poverty', The Philosophical Journal, 13 no. 1 (1976), p. 42; R.A. Cage, 'The Scottish Poor Law, 1745-1845' (Glasgow University, Ph.d. thesis 1974), Table 24.

in groups of ones and twos, to small craft and service industries. True, out of the entire potential working population of 2,166, the largest single group was directly employed in the manufacture of textiles - 515 or 23.78%. However, 247 or 11.40% were engaged in 49 separate trades and crafts; 174 or 8.03% were merchants or dealers; 156 or 7.20% worked in the building trade; 123 or 5.68% were involved with the service industries; and 74 or 3.42% worked in the metal industry.¹

I would argue from this that it is misleading to portray the parish as a whole as one dominated by a single industry. In that sense, its experiences in industrial depression and poverty would not be as relevant for areas dominated by a single industry or branch of an industry, such as coal-mining, weaving or later iron. An example of such an area was Paisley with its fancy shawl industry which suffered acute depression in the 1830's. Having said that, on closer inspection the St. John's survey did reveal large concentrations of weavers in particular proportions of the parish. (See table overleaf). Most notably, proportions six, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen and fifteen (see map, page 130) had 34.4%, 38.0%, 45.6%, 44.4% and 44.7% of their respective populations engaged as weavers. It can be seen that the majority of these proportions were situated on the eastern side of the parish, which was acknowledged to be the poorer half of St. John's, and for whose benefit the chapel of ease was to be built in 1822. Thus, although it is misleading to designate the entire parish as necessarily one of the poorest in Glasgow, as Chalmers did, the survey also reveals there was indeed a source of

1. See below, Appendix 2, pp. 415-6.

TABLE 2: Number of Weavers and Paupers per Proportion, St. John's 1819.

Prop.n	Population	No. Occupations Listed	No. Weavers	% of Working Population	No. Paupers	% of Prop.n's Population	Ranking in Parish
1	363	73	13	17.8	4	1.10	12th
2	337	73	1	1.3	0	0	22nd=
3	429	102	5	4.9	13	3.03	2nd
4	429	68	3	4.4	3	0.85	15th
5	320	73	11	19.1	2	0.62	18th
6	423	88	24	27.2	6	1.42	9th
7	532	113	3	2.6	8	1.50	6th
8	494	102	8	7.8	6	1.21	11th
9	205	60	10	16.6	3	1.46	8th
10	702	117	40	34.4	5	0.71	17th
11	464	92	35	38.0	5	1.08	13th
12	499	89	31	34.8	3	0.60	19th
13	401	92	42	45.6	3	0.75	16th
14	356	90	40	44.4	2	0.56	20th
15	487	105	47	44.7	8	1.64	5th
16	451	98	11	11.2	6	1.33	10th
17	459	96	18	18.1	1	0.22	21st
18	476	119	17	14.2	7	1.47	7th
19	545	122	4	3.3	11	2.02	3rd
20	350	80	4	5.0	0	0	22nd=
21	389	83	2	2.4	12	3.08	1st
22	210	39	0	0	2	0.95	14th
23	279	51	0	0	0	0	22nd=
24	404	79	9	18.8	7	1.73	4th
25	378	81	9	11.1	0	0	22nd=
	10,382	2,258	387	17.1	117	1.12	

Sources: C.P., CHA 5.1.14, Statistical, Moral and Educational Survey of St. John's Parish, 1819
C.P., CHA 5.1.16, Description of the Proportions of St. John's Parish, 1819.
C.P., CHA 5.2.19, Statement of Account, 1819/20.

potential trouble inherent in the predominance of weavers in its eastern half.

Another indication of the doubtful nature of Chalmers' assertions of the poverty of his parish, was the initial figure for the number of sessional poor in the parish in comparison with the figures for the other eight Glasgow parishes. Before the scheme was put into operation, and as part of its campaign to prove to the town council that Glasgow would be worse off with Chalmers' scheme,¹ the General Session did a survey of all kirk session paupers in Glasgow. It deduced the St. John's ones from the records of the three parishes that had been divided up to form St. John's. From this it drew up a table which revealed the latter not as the poorest of the nine parishes in its high number of paupers, but as the sixth lowest with 125 paupers - that is, even before the experiment had begun. The Tron, which Chalmers had just left, was the highest with 271, and St. David's Ramshorn the lowest with 31.²

Apart from this evidence of the general nature of St. John's parish, and of the numbers and type of agents who worked there, there is some surviving material relating to the daily management of its poor relief. This information is perhaps more revealing than the bare statistical facts that Chalmers himself printed and that the session records hold. It comes in the form of letters written by some of the agents to their pastor. There are obvious limitations to such evidence. For example, letters do not survive from all the agents, and so a wide sample of their attitudes and experiences is not available. Taking this into account, it would still be true to say that an interesting glimpse of life in the parish is caught through

1. See above, pp. 103, 124.

2. S.R.A., TD/209.2, G. S. M., 1819-1832, 2 September 1819.

what letters do still exist.

One of the most striking aspects of many of these surviving letters is the obvious spiritual commitment of the authors to their personal Christian growth and the conversion of the parishioners in their charge. For example, John Smith expressed himself on this theme:

I have great delight in the solitary hour when¹ the heart is self questioned and the spirit communes with itself.

Robert Brown, like Smith an elder first in the Tron and then St. John's, wrote to Chalmers acknowledging his debt to him for deepening spiritual awareness, and asserting that all forms of life which did not acknowledge God were "vanity and vexation of spirit".² James Thomson, a sabbath school teacher who later became an elder in St. John's, in 1821, was offered the eldership at the start of the scheme, but because of his conviction of the gravity of the position, was at first concerned that he did not have sufficient time to devote himself to it as the position warranted.³ Patrick Falconer, yet another elder from the Tron who joined the St. John's session, was the most prolific writer on this subject in Chalmers' Glasgow years and long after Chalmers had left. He was convinced that the parochial scheme was:

... the way of bringing home Truths necessary to the everlasting Peace of many who cannot so much as desire them therefore cannot be expected to go in quest of them for themselves.⁴

1. C.P., CHA 5.4.12, 29 July 1818, John Smith III to T. Chalmers.

2. St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.110, 29 July 1818, R. Brown to T. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 4.14.26, 4 February 1819, J. Thomson to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.50.11, 1825, J. Thomson to T. Chalmers; and S.R.O., CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 17 June 1821.

4. St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.300, 1 August 1818, P. Falconer to T. Chalmers; and 304, 23 August 1819, same to same.

Chalmers appears to have often consulted Falconer in particular over the suitability of potential parish workers as elders, deacons or sabbath teachers, precisely because of Falconer's deep Christian commitment.¹ It is interesting that it was apparently from Falconer and Chalmers' cousin Walter Wood, a sabbath teacher in St. John's, and not from Chalmers himself, that the idea later emerged that all the parish agency - elders, deacons and teachers - plus Chalmers and his assistant should meet monthly for fellowship, and to provide:

... a very promising² mean under the Divine blessing for directing and enlivening them.

These letters from the St. John's agents to their pastor on the whole reveal not only a common personal Christian commitment, but also a shared concern for the conversion of their charges. For example, John Graham, an elder, wrote to Chalmers in 1819:

As my love to God increases so do I feel a desire to communicate with those of my proportion.³

It is noticeable that all the examples above are from the pens of elders or sabbath school teachers - that is, the agents whose charge was the spiritual welfare of their parishioners. In the context of poor relief, their attitude was important, since although in theory it was the exclusive preserve of the deacons, it has already been seen that there were only thirteen of those until late 1823, and the elders and other agents appear to have become involved regardless of what

1. For example, see St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.301, 14 September 1818; 302, 28 November 1818; and 303, 12 February 1819., all P. Falconer to T. Chalmers.

2. St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.306, 30 June 1821, P. Falconer to T. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 4.11.58, 16 August 1819, J. Graham to T. Chalmers.

Chalmers had painted as the ideal of their total aloofness. For example, some of the sabbath teachers helped to survey the poor of their districts before the experiment itself was fully begun.¹ One such teacher was Donald McLeod, who reported to Chalmers in August 1819 that there was only one sick person in his area, a Thomas Stevenson, who was insane and dying. McLeod had visited him, and praised his patience and resignation. He went on to write that there were few others in his area who displayed similar qualities, but rather:

there are another class of a different cast, who profess and can talk about religion but do no more, who are pure in their own eyes but are not yet washed from their filthiness; ²

With so few of the parishioners having seats in St. John's or in any church, this statement highlights the practical dangers of the ambiguity in Chalmers' theories concerning the spiritual and moral welfare of his flock. Could such obviously spiritual men as have been listed above look at their charges in a pure, raw natural state, forgetting for the moment the spiritual state of their souls, and keeping in reserve the knowledge that by liberating the natural state they would in fact be helping in their personal aim of conversion?

The potential confusion arising from the ambiguity inherent in the scheme itself is highlighted when such agents were involved in any reference to poverty and the general moral state of their charges. For example, in July 1820 Patrick Falconer wrote to Chalmers, having completed his second annual survey of his proportion. (Falconer was elder of proportion eighteen which was situated on the western, Gallowgate side of the parish.) From the surviving poor relief statements for St. John's, it is apparent that his district had seven

1. C.P., CHA 4.13.49, 22 April 1819, D. Stow to T. Chalmers. Stow became an elder on 11 November 1821. S.R.O., CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR.

2. C.P., CHA 4.12.40, 14 August 1819, D. McLeod to T. Chalmers.

sessional paupers in 1819 out of a population of 476. In other words, 0.47% of its population were receiving official relief, making it the seventh highest in the parish (see table, page 163). By 1820, the number of paupers had fallen to five, and its place in the parish pecking order to eleventh.¹ In other words, on paper it appeared as one of Chalmers' success stories as regards its poor relief figures alone. Yet Falconer's letter of July 1820 was very discouraging, and merits a full quotation:

... I really must say that on going through the people this time I feel more disheartened than on any former occasion- the number of removals - fallings off even from the former church goings, or Seats; and an encreased Poverty, I think generally - All and all I fear the proportion has fallen off rather than gained in Morals from the time I got it first - indeed I know very well that though I go a great deal amongst them particular cases get too Much of My attention, and too little of it is given generally.²

Falconer gives the impression of a great and laborious struggle for which it was vital to have the "Spirit of the Lord" to fight with:

It is certainly too plain that there is a demoralising process making rapid Progress in the Masses of the Population of our large Towns - at least this one.³

In other words, despite the statistical "fact" of decreased numbers of official paupers which was in accordance with Chalmers' predictions and conclusions about the experiment, Falconer still thought that morally, spiritually and economically his area was worse off. His disquiet may have been in part due to his own scrupulosity, but once more a different insight is given of the effects of Chalmers' scheme than the latter's accounts convey. It is obvious from this letter that Falconer was not disillusioned with Chalmers' methods and ultimate goal - to use the elders, deacons and teachers as the means

1. C.P., CHA 5.2.19, 'State of Sessional Poor, October 1819 - September 1820'; and CHA 5.1.16, 'Description of St. John's, 1819'.

2. St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.305, 22 July 1820, P. Falconer to T. Chalmers.

3. Ibid.

of converting communities within small areas of the parish. However, he does seem to have regarded the town's problems as potentially overwhelming.

This sentiment was echoed by James Wilson - a surgeon who became an elder in the parish after Chalmers left:

... perhaps this item, individual way of doing things is the best and certainly the only left in an overgrown city when the moral means have been so neglected and at present so inadequate to the extent of our population.¹

Yet, like Falconer, Wilson recognised the key necessary ingredient for this potential recipe for success as being time. The elders needed time to visit and become acquainted with every one in their areas.² Indeed, it was on these grounds that Wilson himself refused the eldership in 1820, and was not to take it up until 1825.

In other words, the surviving evidence reveals that some at least of Chalmers' most devoted followers amongst the elders considered their role very seriously, and regarded time spent visiting as crucial to their success. Chalmers' claim in his written accounts that the deacons knew every poor person, every pauper, and every available source of help from neighbours and friends, would indicate that the deacons' task, to be accomplished effectively, also required a significant porportion of time spent visiting.³ It is ironic, therefore, that one of the aspects of their work that Chalmers and

1. C.P., CHA 4.16.61, 19 January 1820, J. Wilson to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.10.12, 24 October 1819, 'A Hearer in St. John's' to T. Chalmers. This anonymous letter after Chalmers' sermon appointing the first set of elders pointed out that the tasks set out by Chalmers for the elders would only be fully carried out if there were two, if not three full-time assistants in the parish.

3. Cleland, Statistical and Population Tables, p. 115: Cleland wrote that the elders and deacons in St. John's were acquainted with "every poor person and pauper in the parish."

most of the deacons had been at great pains to point out in 1823 was the facility and minimum time necessary to carry out the duties adequately. Once more it would seem that the spiritual and secular sides of the experiment were at odds with each other.

This dichotomy can also be seen in the surviving testimony of the deacons themselves amongst Chalmers' correspondence. Once more the idea comes across that the evangelical and social aims of the programme did not work out as smoothly in practice as they did in Chalmers' flowing printed accounts of his theory and its application in St. John's. For example, one deacon, James Sword junior, the son of a wealthy Glasgow merchant, disagreed, in somewhat muted tones, with Chalmers' criteria for giving relief in the particular case of a widow in his proportion. Widow Houston, Chalmers had informed Sword, was of "very good character", and so Chalmers wanted her to receive some relief. However, Sword himself considered that there were many who were worse off, due to : "the extreme depressed state of weaving just now". He added that her house was:

too dear for one in her situation and the working classes are all eyes and ears to find out what is done for any individual at present.¹

Another sign of disquiet with Chalmers' overall criteria for relief came in the form of an anonymous letter from one of his elders. The author stated that he had overheard two deacons speaking against Chalmers' plans as visionary and too time-consuming, and declaring that they would not carry them out.² Interestingly, one of the first and most dilligent of the deacons, Robert Kettle, later wrote that he approved of Chalmers' general principles, but "he did not

1. C.P., CHA 4.13.55, J. Sword to T. Chalmers (not dated, but probably written in 1819 or 1820, since Sword referred to "the extreme depressed state of weaving just now").

2. C.P., CHA 4.10.10, 15 October 1819, 'An Elder of St. John's' (anonymous) to T. Chalmers.

carry the Doctor's theory of pauperism to the extent he did".

Kettle added that at first he was very upset by the "starving condition" of many of the families in his district, but, as Chalmers had assured him he would, he found "secret springs of supply" and that eased his mind. He also went on to say, however, that one of those springs was the agents assisting the poor in procuring work.¹ Once more, the assertion by Chalmers that the people had the means to support themselves entirely is cast into doubt.

This ability of the deacons to find work for their people was minimised by Chalmers' overall view of the "success" of the experiment. It was symptomatic of the overall gradual improvement in the economic condition of Glasgow, however, and one of the deacons at least recognised the latter as being of vital importance in the improvement of the condition of the people in his proportion. Campbell Naismith, a merchant, who, like Kettle was one of the first batch of deacons, wrote to Chalmers in May 1820. He reported little advance in the numbers taking seats in the parish church, but he did perceive a general improvement in their economic condition:

I have much pleasure in observing some improvement in the cotton manufacture, the cotton weavers are not only all employed, and getting greater choices of work, but there is an advance on various kinds of work from 5 to 10 per cent.²

This progress, however, was due to economic factors, not the workings of the natural system of poor relief itself, and once more the spiritual impact of the the scheme was estimated as being very low. He reported only four session paupers in the district, and one application for aid from a Bernard McEwan that he had refused: "on

1. C.P., William Hanna Box 'Reminiscences about Thomas Chalmers', by Robert Kettle, Glasgow, 11 January 1850, p. 2.

2. C.P., CHA 4.16.14, 31 May 1820, Campbell Naismith to T. Chalmers.

the score of his not working but living on charity".¹

In July 1820 Naismith again wrote to Chalmers, this time to give him the results of his annual survey of his proportion. He reported fifteen new families in his district, but as regards church-going "most of them display as much apathy as their predecessors".² He went on to list four families in his district who were poor, although he did not say whether they were receiving sessional relief or not. These were: a father burdened with the upkeep of his daughter's illegitimate child, a dying man, a girl with a fever, and a family with a new baby.

Details survive of only two cases where official kirk session pensions were actually recommended by the St. John's agents. Both of these are revealing in that they demonstrate the rigorous conditions that indeed had to be met before such relief would be contemplated. The first was in a letter from one of the St. John's elders, Mr. Ramsay, to Chalmers. In it he described the situation of a widow whom he and Deacon McVey had visited by order of the court of deacons. (Once more this indicates that the elders were indeed involved in the practical details of the administration of poor relief because of the fact there were simply not enough deacons to make the follow-up visits that Chalmers had laid out in his directory as a second check on the situation of applicants). Widow McInlay had four children and was expecting a fifth. The two eldest children and the mother earned a total of 4/9d. a week. Her husband, a weaver, had died only three weeks before, and his funeral had been paid for out of the proceeds of selling his watch and some furniture. The rental of his loom was

1. Ibid.

2. C.P., CHA 4.6.16, 31 July 1820, C. Naismith to T. Chalmers.

expected to bring in another eight pence a week. Mr. McVey thought she should be put on the highest pension of 2/6d. a week, especially since she herself would also soon be unable to work, when her baby was born, and her eldest daughter would also cease to contribute since the mother intended to send her into service. The letter reveals that the two agents, Ramsay and McVey, had enquired into the family's moral situation as well as establishing the bare economic facts:

Mrs McInlay's character seems respectable among her neighbours, her landlord William Nelson says her husband's character was equally good, although in a bad state of health for twelve months he died without debt which shows a correct disposition, he was I think six weeks confined to bed before his death which took all the trifle he had saved to support himself and family.¹

The second case is also to be found in a letter to Chalmers. On this occasion it was one of his female workers, Miss Lilly a sabbath school teacher in the parish, who reported a case which she thought had been "overlooked by the deacons". Again, a widow was involved, Mrs. Bennie. Her husband had been dead eight months, and she also had four children. Two of the latter attended the parish school of industry, one went to the parish school, paid for by Mrs. McCulloch, wife of the elder John McCulloch and another of Chalmers' female helpers, and the youngest went to another school paid for by a neighbour for whom the children did errands in return for her charity. At her husband's death, Mrs. Bennie sold a clock and clothes to pay arrears of rent and to support her family since for the first few weeks she had no work. Miss Lilly was apparently absent from Glasgow at that time, but when she returned she stated the case to the elder McCulloch "who has since given her employment". However, the widow still did not have enough food for the whole family, and she did not

1. C.P., CHA 4.29.4, 19 August 1823, W. Ramsay to T. Chalmers. See below, pp. 203, 232 for more details about Mrs McInlay after Chalmers left St. John's.

have help from anyone else. As a result, the eldest child had left the school of industry and was now a servant. Even so, Mrs. Bennie was behind in her rent, and lacked "such necessities as coals, clothes, shoes, water, etc." Despite such blatant penury, a character reference was also apparently necessary, which Miss Lilly duly provided:

To my knowledge, since her Husband's death, Mrs. Bennie has been a well behaved, industrious woman, and I do not think any woman in her circumstances could have done more for her children.¹

It is a great pity that the outcome of this case is unknown. No reply from Chalmers survives, and so it is uncertain whether the deacons concerned were ignorant of Mrs. Bennie's case or whether a source of benevolence unknown to Miss Lilly was the reason for her not receiving relief. Whatever the cause it is not surprising from these two, admittedly limited, examples, that Chalmers could boast of such few numbers being admitted as regular paupers on the parish roll.

The regular kirk session records do not shed any further light on the treatment of the poor in St. John's during these early years. The bulk of the session meetings dealt with discipline cases involving cases of "antenuptial fornication" and illegitimate children. In this the St. John's kirk session was little different from its counterparts in other parishes.² Like them, it is also difficult to judge the success of those discipline measures. It is important to point out again that Chalmers himself made few claims as regards the overall improvement of morals, the flowering of natural benevolence - except in his negative argument that it must have existed since the numbers of new sessional poor were so small - nor to any marked

1. C.P., CHA 4.27.24, 5 November 1823, A. Lillie to T. Chalmers.

2. S.R.O., CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 1819-1836; CH2/818.4, St. George's, Glasgow, KSR, 1818-32; CH2/550.5, St. Mungo's, Glasgow, KSR, 1809-34.

increase in those attending church or their general Christian commitment. Given the wide scope of human life, human emotions, and human relations that his theoretical writings on the problems of large towns had embraced since he had arrived in Glasgow in 1815, his concentration on statistical totals and a slim body of personal evidence from himself and his deacons would appear to have left too many questions to be convincing. This chapter has revealed that even the evidence he did offer was suspect in several important respects. From all this it is surely no understatement to conclude that the first four years of the St. John's experiment were not the undisputed success, even in terms of Chalmers' own initial claims for his scheme. It remains to be seen what the next thirteen years of the parochial system revealed.

There is no disputing Chalmers' personal involvement and his ceaseless exertions in St. John's. Unfortunately, one important source of evidence - his diary - does not survive intact for the four relevant years, but only spans one of those years, 1822. It is obvious from that diary, however, that he was indeed continuously involved in the parish, especially in the first six months of 1822. (The latter part of 1822 was partly spent on a visit to England, collecting information and evidence about its poor relief systems). Between parochial visits, agency dinners, meetings with individual agents, and attending deacon's and session meetings, his days were very full. This was the year in which the chapel of ease was erected in the parish, and Chalmers was actively involved in organising support for it. This diary also included a reference to the vexations and frustrations of a busy city parish, and it is obvious from it that once he returned from his English trip on 19 October there was a marked decline in his personal involvement in the day to day affairs

of the parish. He increasingly noted down that he was sick and confined to bed, or "colded".¹ The malaise of his Tron days seemed to be re-emerging as the sheer effort of the last few years took their toll. Once more his thoughts turned to his personal studies and his efforts at "composition" - especially as regards completing The Christian and Civic Economy. It is not surprising that immediately after this diary closed he was to announce his intention of leaving Glasgow to take up an academic position in his beloved Fife.²

The 1822 diary reveals the methodical annual visitation of the parish by Chalmers. One of his deacons, Robert Kettle, later wrote that such visits had to be brief because of the extent of the area covered. Kettle went on to say, however, that they were none the less very tiring as each tenement stair was climbed in turn, and a few words exchanged with the occupants.³ In his first visitation of the parish between 1819 and 1820 Chalmers made handwritten notes in his copy of the complete parish survey. From these notes, taken down alongside individual families' names, it is obvious that his main concern as he went amongst his people was their spiritual condition. Thus he noted whether individuals were particularly pious, if they needed seats in the church, and the state of the education of their children. He was also concerned about the aged and the sick, and noted if such families should be regularly visited by himself and the elders.

Chalmers' concern for the progress of his experiment in poor relief was also obvious from this survey, as he made a note of those

1. C.P., CHA 6.1.9, Journal, vol. 6, 24, 26 October, 9, 25, 26 and 28 November 1822.

2. Ibid., 20 January 1823, Chalmers referred to his letter of resignation to the Lord provost. He did not actually leave until November.

3. C.P., William Hanna Box, R. Kettle's 'Reminiscences', p. 4.

who were out of work or receiving "charity".¹ An interesting footnote to his ministry in the parish is his personal charity to a few individuals in it. For example, James Baird, an unemployed hearer in St. John's had a consumptive wife and one of his sons was also out of work. He had applied for help to the elder of his district, Mr. Robert Neilson, but to no avail, and so wrote to Chalmers appealing to him for some official help out of his present desperate situation. He referred to "former favours" from Chalmers, asked him to visit his family, and appended a postscript appealing for any of the pastor's old clothes, especially a hat "as I wish to attend church as regularly as possible".² Unfortunately Chalmers' response is unknown.

The second surviving testimony of Chalmers personal involvement is more definite. John Sommerville, one of the first deacons in the parish, wrote to Chalmers in 1823 and returned 7/6d. to him. It was the remains of one pound that Chalmers had given Sommerville to use to help a Mr. Carmichael. The deacon had given a total of 12/6d. to Carmichael on different occasions, for which Carmichael was apparently grateful. The cause of his temporary distress had been an injured leg. This was nearly recovered and he had told the deacon "he could now do for himself and his family, without any further assistance."³

Chalmers was thus willing to personally demonstrate the fourth fountain of natural relief as long as it was disassociated from his

1. C.P., CHA 5.1.14, 'Statistical Survey', Chalmers' handwritten notes throughout the description of the inhabitants of each proportion.

2. St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.77, 9 October 1819, J. Baird to T. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 4.29.36, 25 January 1823, J. Sommerville to T. Chalmers.

official capacity as minister. These cases once more add a touch of humanity to the largely arid picture of factual evidence he put forward officially to support his views.

Another frequent remark jotted down by Chalmers in the visitation notes appended to his survey was "female introduction". This, apparently, was a reference to a group of helpers that have so far been largely omitted from this study: his band of female visitors. There was a precedent in Glasgow for female members of the wealthier classes concerning themselves with charitable work. The Glasgow Female Society was founded in 1799 to relieve poor and indigent women. By 1814 it helped 227 individuals annually, and had a budget of nearly £500. An auxiliary society was also set up in 1812: the Benevolent Society for Clothing the Poor. Both these societies were rigorous in their attention to self-improvement, education and scripture reading, and required strict investigation before affording relief of any sort. The auxiliary society stamped all the clothes it made to prevent "the worthless from applying it to an improper use." Glasgow women were also involved in the Glasgow Auxiliary Bible Society; as subscribers totalling over £100 to the Glasgow Lunatic Asylum; with the Glasgow Royal Infirmary; and with the Ladies' School of Industry for orphan girls.¹

The logic of Chalmers' position against all charitable societies no matter how discriminating they were in their charity, did not

1. Glasgow Courier, 4 January, 19 February, 5 April 1814; 1 April, 23 August 1817, 18 August 1818; Cleland, Annals, vol. 2, pp. 249, 264.

prevent him from marshalling the desire to act philanthropically that was obviously present among some Glasgow middle and upper class women. In 1819 he recorded the names of five female visitors for the parish, whom he attached to particular proportions to help the deacons and elders. There were also at least twelve "Female Teachers".¹ Chalmers apparently believed that the feminine touch in charitable work was important, and he himself felt its benefits. As he recorded in his diary:

Had a very pleasant parochial round with Miss Freeland and do feel the soothing influence of right female society.²

Some of these female visitors were sisters or daughters of the male agents - for example, Miss Smith, the two Miss Naismiths and Mrs. Naismith. A portion of Chalmers' correspondence with one of the women, a Miss Margaret Marshall has survived in Glasgow University Library. From these letters it is apparent that Chalmers expected the women to be a "good" - that is a Christian and moral - influence on girls in their districts, to encourage cleanliness, to help at the sabbath schools, and to provide each other with Christian fellowship.³

In addition to fostering this desire amongst better off ladies, to act positively in the problem-laden cities, Chalmers maintained contact with his influential friends of the Glasgow political and business elites such as James Ewing, James Dalglish, the

1. C.P., CHA 5.1.14, 'Statistical Survey': Misses King, Fleming and Smith and Mrs. Marshall; CHA 5.2.17, the twelve teachers were Misses: Cochrane, Lilly, Naismith, Janet Naismith, Whitelaw, Lewis, McArthur, Stowe, Irvine, Jane Irvine, Bell and Nixon.

2. C.P., CHA 6.1.9, Journal vol. 6, 28 January 1822.

3. G.U.L., MS. Gen. 1036, four letters: 17 April 1820, 27 April 1820, 28 April 1820 and one undated, all from T. Chalmers to M. Marshall.

Tennents and the Parkers.¹ His correspondence reveals that he also kept in touch with Kirkman Finlay and Robert Findlay.² Charles Hutcheson, the son of a wealthy Glasgow merchant, knew Chalmers at this time, and recorded his meetings with him in his diary. From this it can also be seen that Chalmers was still on very friendly terms with James Dennistoun, the rich banker who had helped him in the Tron. One incident in particular stands out in these diary accounts. In March 1823 Chalmers visited his cousin Mr. Walter Wood, and during the evening he brought up the subject of savings banks and their beneficial results. Mr. Dennistoun was also present, and likewise spoke in their favour. Chalmers then went on to describe the "parish economy" at work in St. John's, giving two case histories of families who had received much more relief from their neighbours and relatives than the session could ever have afforded had it taken them on its roll. According to Hutcheson, Dennistoun supported Chalmers' ideas on this also, particularly as regards the necessity for great scrutiny of individual applicants for relief.³

1. C.P., CHA 6.1.9, Journal vol. 6, 4, 29 January, 11, 24, 25 February, 11, 12 March, 4 April, 29 July and 9 December 1822.

2. For example, C.P., CHA 4.11.39, 4.15.22, and 4.15.21, 14 December 1819, 4 May and 6 June 1820, K. Finlay to T. Chalmers; also CHA 4.5.19, 11 May 1820, R. Findlay to T. Chalmers.

3. N.L.S., MS. 2771, Charles Hutcheson, Diary, 1820-1848: 10 May 1822, f. 33; 20 December 1822, f. 44; 14 March 1823, ff. 45-7.

This continued support from one section of the Glasgow elite was important for Chalmers' reputation, his position in Glasgow, and also for the material help it made available for some of his other projects in his parish. Namely, the provision of secular education, and the erection of a chapel of ease. Both of these schemes will be looked at again in the next chapter, but it is important to show how they began since they both owed much to Chalmers' personal involvement.

As has already been seen, education was of primary importance to Chalmers. At this stage he thought that it could and should be provided for at the parish level, and out of parochial funds, including donations from the wealthy.¹ This principle applied to the rapidly expanding towns, meant the necessity for several local schools within each large parish. Hanna described how Chalmers went about accomplishing this in St. John's. True to his theoretical principles on this being one aspect of charity that the wealthy could safely help financially, he unashamedly solicited as much generosity from the rich in Glasgow as possible. The provision and endowment of schools was an expensive business, and it was in that area that the rich could be of most use.

1. In a footnote to the 1839 edition of The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 1, C.W., vol. 14, p. 155, Chalmers added that he was now convinced that without Government help neither Christian nor common education would be fully provided for.

An Education Committee was accordingly formed in the parish, the aim of which was to build schools for the St. John's parishioners. The Committee members are unknown, but their funds were largely provided by the wealthy day congregation of St. John's and Chalmers' supporters among the Glasgow elite.¹ Chalmers himself gave £100 to this first project, and six of his elders and deacons also gave donations, ranging from £21 to £100 each.² The initial total collected in this way was £1,200, and with this a school with two rooms and two masters was built and ready to be opened by the middle of July 1820.³ By the time Chalmers had left the city in November 1823 a second school had been built and endowed, using some of the large surplus that existed from the St. John's collections since comparatively little had been spent from them on poor relief.⁴ A third school was in the process of being built, providing education for 793 children in all.⁵

True, to his stated intention, these schools were restricted to

1. C.P., CHA 4.11.39, 14 December 1819, K. Finlay to T. Chalmers. Finlay actively promoted Chalmers' education pamphlet in London amongst such figures as Henry Brougham and William Wilberforce. More directly, James Dennistoun and William Mentieth gave £100 each; C.S. Parker, William Dunn and Robert Dalglish £50 each and Hugh Tennent £25 - from C.P., CHA 5.1.13, Chalmers' notebook entitled 'Record of Transactions Connected with the Establishment of Parish Schools in St. John's, 1819', 4 December 1819 - 7 December 1820. (Hereafter 'Record of the Establishment of Parochial Schools. 1819').

2. C.P., CHA 5.1.13, 'Record of the Establishment of Parochial Schools. 1819'. The three elders were: John Wilson, Alan Buchanan, Matthew Montgomerie; the three deacons were Alexander McGregor, James Sword and James Playfair.

3. Hanna, Memoirs, 2, p. 234.

4. Cleland, Statistical and Population Tables, p. 118: by 1822 St. John's parish was eighth lowest in Glasgow as regards the number of its sessional poor, had by far the highest balance; that is, £604 13s. 3d. The next highest, was St. George's with £295 6s. 2d.

5. Hanna, Memoirs, 2, p. 236.

the parishioners of St. John's, and although they were not free, the fees were kept very low. The total impact of this schooling and its cost will be evaluated in the next chapter, but at first sight it was certainly an impressive achievement over such a short period.

The other important project with which Chalmers was concerned in St. John's was the provision of a chapel of ease. True to his letter to Ewing before the St. John's experiment was finalised in 1818¹, Chalmers ensured that an assistant was quickly found to help him in St. John's and so to ensure that evening services could be conducted specifically for the poorer parishioners. His assistant was appointed in October 1819, and was himself destined to become infamous in church circles - Edward Irving (1792 - 1834).² It is not entirely certain how Irving's assistantship was funded, but the available evidence indicates that it was similar to the Tron assistantship. That is, once more Chalmers' wealthy friends provided the wherewithal for the pastor they admired so much to have some of the strain taken out of his hectic ministry.³ Irving was a committed worker, and appears to have been active in visiting the St. John's parishioners, and promoting Chalmers' ideas on sabbath and secular education on the locality principle both in Scotland and

1. C.P., CHA 3.8.43, n.d., T. Chalmers to J. Ewing. See below, p. 118.

2. Edward Irving was later to become the leader of the Catholic Apostolic Church.

3. C.P., CHA 4.13.7, 17 August 1819, C.S. Parker to T. Chalmers: Parker and Hugh Tennent promised that financial help to fund an assistant, as they had also done in the Tron.

Ireland.¹ Like Blyth in the Tron, Irving became personally attached to Chalmers and his family. Charles Hutcheson attended Irving's farewell sermon in St. John's (Irving left before the chapel was completed, to take up the charge of minister to a Scottish congregation in London). According to Hutcheson, Irving spoke of:

... the reception he had met with from the poor of the parish whether churchmen dissenter or catholic was the green and refreshing spot on which his memory delighted to rest.

He went on to ask:

where would he find the pastor's house in which he could go out and in as a son, or where in the whole world such a set of men as that phalanx who seconded and supported their eloquent leader who had when others only skirted the shores, dashed out into the broad ocean with only them for earthly support.²

If Hutcheson's memory and records were accurate, this is yet another example of the charisma Chalmers and his ideas undoubtedly had for some of his closest associates.

By 1822, however, it was apparent that the 'poor' of the parish were still not being reached by the gospel message. At the beginning of that year Chalmers recorded in his diary the idea of erecting a chapel of ease in the poorer, eastern half of the parish - an area apparently still relatively untouched by the outreach of his evening sermons and the ministrations of the elders and sabbath teachers.³ As with the poor relief experiment, Chalmers personally expended much energy on this cause, and by March 1822 it was inscribed into the regular session minutes as a definite plan to be enacted as soon as

1. C.P., CHA 4.1.5.47, 3 August 1820, E. Irving to T. Chalmers: this letter was sent while Irving was in Dublin, promoting Chalmers' ideas on education and locality there, particularly in reference to the organisation of Sunday Schools.

2. N.L.S., MS. 2773, Diary of C. Hutcheson, 19 May 1822, f. 34.

3. C.P., CHA 6.1.9, Journal, vol. 6, 7, 8, 10, 12 January, 20 February and 6 March 1822.

possible.¹

Funding for the chapel was one of the major problems. The town council, patron of the ten city parishes, and so the obvious source, had no money to either create another parish or to erect a chapel of ease.² The only source of money available, therefore, was private subscription. Like education, this was another area in which, Chalmers had argued, the rich could and should give as much as they could, and so he was able to call on their generosity without any qualms of conscience. He apparently adopted Gladstone's plan for building churches.³ This entailed the sale of shares in the chapel totalling £2,500, to be repaid over the years from the seat rents of the chapel. Chalmers and eleven others personally subscribed to this plan, Chalmers investing £500 in it. As with the education programme, the wealthy among Chalmers' elders and deacons stepped forward plus two of his influential Glasgow supporters - although at least one person Chalmers approached refused to help, much to his disgust.⁴ One thousand pounds for the project was subscribed by one family outside of Glasgow - Lady Grace Douglas of Cavers and her son James, both evangelicals and keen supporters of church extension.⁵ They were

1. Ibid., 8, 12, 22, 25, 26, 27 March, 10, 20, 23 April, 9, 20 May 1822: all these entries referred to meetings with and letters to the Lord Provost, the town council, Glasgow Presbytery, subscribers and the General Assembly; see also S.R.O., CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 4 and 25 March 1822.

2. G.B.R., 8 March 1822.

3. Brown, Chalmers, p. 139.

4. C.P., CHA 6.1.9, Journal, vol. 6, 20 March 1822.

5. S.R.O., CH2/176.5, St. Thomas' Chapel Minutes, 24 May 1822: cites C.S. Parker and J. Dennistoun as subscribers; also one deacon, Edward Walkinshaw and five elders, Henry Paul, Allan Buchanan, Alexander McGregor, John Wilson, and Patrick Falconer. The Douglas' subscriptions are recorded in CH2/176.5 on 29 April 1823; also in C.P., CHA 4.25.11, Lady Grace Douglas to T. Chalmers, and CHA 5.2.73, 13 February 1823, James Marshall to T. Chalmers. James Douglas was in correspondence with Chalmers about supplying money for other chapels of ease in Glasgow, and was also involved in a plan to buy up patronage in order to ensure Evangelical ministers - see C.P., CHA 4.25.17, 19, 7 July and 27 September 1823, J. Douglas to T. Chalmers.

patrons of the very first church Chalmers had served as an asistant, in Cavers in 1801.

As well as the initial finance for the actual building of the chapel and an endowment for the minister's stipend, Chalmers had another major problem when it came to considering such a project. Usually in Glasgow, the collections from the chapels of ease automatically went to the General Session, which used them to help provide for education in all the city parishes. Chalmers wanted the St. John's chapel collections to simply replace the collections of the evening congregation in the church proper as the fund for the relief of the new poor in the parish so demonstrating his theory that the poor could support themselves. The evening sermon was to be done away with. It was over this demand that he had to fight with the Glasgow Presbytery and finally before the General Assembly in 1822. He won his case, and so established the financial source for the continuation of his experiment in poor relief in the parish after his departure. However, the long term impact the chapel was to have on that experiment as a whole needs to be examined over the entire eighteen years of the experiment's existence. As with education, this will be done in the next chapter.

The length of this chapter is some indication in itself of the volume of activity Chalmers expounded in his four years in St. John's. It is not surprising, given his parochial and literary pursuits, and his fact-finding journey to England of 1822, that he was exhausted by the end of the year and that his major reason for the acceptance of the position of professor of moral philosophy in St. Andrews was his

ill-health.¹ Having said that, his malaise with the Glasgow scene generally never seems to have deserted him entirely. He was out of his element in its magnified world of concentrated and at the same time enlarged social, economic and spiritual problems. His yearning for the 'simpler' academic and rural life once more came to the fore.

This desire for a more straightforward life of pure academia was perhaps symptomatic in itself. It has been repeatedly pointed out in this chapter that there was a tension in Chalmers that came across in his writings on poor relief, between the priorities of implementing an ideal social order of a pauper-free society, and the conversion of all to Christianity. He wanted to argue that the one helped the other, but time and again he had contradicted himself, the logic of his position forcing him into the position that Christianity in itself was not necessary for a pure social state in which no man would go hungry. The practical evidence he dealt with in his parish simply reinforced this dichotomy. While his deacons were apparently reassuring him of the ease with which the poor relief scheme taken by itself and helped by general economic factors was operating, his elders were far more wary of giving a wholeheartedly positive view of the spiritual and indeed the moral progress of the parish. Yet this discomfort was entirely ignored in Chalmers' writings on the early outcome of the experiment, writings which in themselves, it has been pointed out, were misleading and uninformed in places.

1. C.P., CHA 5.2.71, 20 January 1823, T. Chalmers to the St. John's Agency.

It would appear that during these years in St. John's Chalmers was taken over by his efforts to prove himself correct in his poor relief scheme - possibly to the neglect of his earlier more purely evangelical commitments. He himself was partly aware of that, and on one occasion recorded in his diary that at a dinner party in Glasgow he had:

Erred in bringing in the topic of pauperism, and so elbowing out better things.¹

Robert Kettle, the deacon, recorded in his reminiscences about Chalmers that he considered that the standard of the great preacher's sermons fell in St. John's as compared to the Tron, and personally surmised that it was due to Chalmers' absorption in pauperism.²

Perhaps it was symptomatic of this awareness of his obsession with the subject, yet genuine concern in the problem, that it was a moral philosophy post Chalmers was to take up. In St. Andrews he was also to take classes in political economy, and so he was leaving Glasgow in 1823 to go to a place where he would have the leisure to prolong his studies on his theories, but also be in contact with the next generation of Church of Scotland ministers.

In eight years, Chalmers had certainly accomplished much as regards the production of several volumes of text on his theories. The main subject of these writings, his poor relief experiment, was to continue for another fourteen years. The next chapter will examine its progress without its creator at the helm. It must be remembered, however, that he sustained an interest in it even in his absence, and in some respects his writings about it in those later years, and his attempts to influence his students and contemporaries generally to emulate it are just as important as the fate of St. John's itself.

1. C.P., CHA 6.1.9, Journal, vol. 6, 8 April 1822.

2. C.P., William Hanna Box; R. Kettle's Reminiscences', p. 10.

CHAPTER FIVE: St. John's without Chalmers -

".. we will never forget him, no never, till we ourselves are in the land of forgetfulness." 1

On 20 January 1823 Chalmers wrote to his agency in St. John's to explain his acceptance of the Moral Philosophy professorship in St. Andrews. Interestingly, this letter included an acknowledgement and justification by him of that tension within him while in St. John's, which was pointed out in the previous chapter:

my attention of late has been divided between the cares of my profession and the studies of general Philanthropy ... I can truly say that when I entered on this field, it was not because it knowingly turned me away from the object of Christian usefulness, but because I apprehended that I there saw the object before me, but the field has widened as I have advanced upon it in so much that I cannot longer retain the office I now hold without injustice to my Parish and congregation, without in fact becoming substantially to all intents and purposes a pluralist.²

In other words, for the moment poor relief, Christian philanthropy and the study of man's motivation to moral actions had won the upper hand over the pastoral care of one particular parish.

In this letter Chalmers went on to say that the attractions of the professorship lay in the unanimity of the College's election of him, the "retirement" it offered for the pursuit of his studies, and its location "among the fondest remembrance of my boyhood". He considered it necessary to justify to the agency the fact that although he was an ordained minister of the church, he was proceeding to an academic post which was not one directly related to the spread of the Word of God:

Moral Philosophy is not Theology, but it stands at the entrance of it and so of all human sciences is the most capable of being turned into an instrument either of guiding aright or of most

1. C.P., CHA 4.28.53, 29 November 1823, M. Montgomerie to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 5.2.71, 20 January 1823, Thomas Chalmers' letter to his Agency on accepting the Moral Philosophy Chair in the University of St. Andrews.

grievously perverting the minds of those¹ who are to be the religious instructors of the succeeding age.

This was a public statement of Chalmers' intention and concerns for the next phase of his life. Interestingly enough, he did not in this letter expound at great lengths on the St. John's parochial experiment itself, nor encourage and exhort the agents to continue and develop it. He was either too intent on justifying what might be interpreted as his abandonment of the St. John's project, or simply assumed the loyalty of his co-workers and their desire to continue his work. The latter assumption would apparently have been justified. On 22 January Chalmers' letter was read out to the elders, deacons and sabbath teachers, and their official written response was one of grief at his departure, but also endorsement of his reasons and an acknowledgement of it being the will of God. They were obviously apprehensive at continuing their work in the parish without Chalmers at their head, but in this they decided:

... to commit themselves to God so that in the end, all things may work together for good and the eternal salvation of many souls.²

That the agency was apprehensive at the thought of losing such a strong leader was understandable. Their individual letters to him throughout 1823 revealed similar fears, but also the desire of many of them to continue God's work in the conversion of the parish and the solidification of the poor relief experiment. William Collins wrote to Chalmers on 20 January saying that many of the agency had called at his shop to discuss the news of Chalmers' departure which had hit the town generally as "a very great sensation". The overall opinion of the agency, Collins wrote, was sympathy with Chalmers' reasons for

1. Ibid.

2. C.P., CHA 4.30.31, 22 January 1823, Letter from the Elders, Deacons and Sabbath School Teachers of St. John's to Thomas Chalmers.

leaving. Although most would have liked him to stay a year or two longer "until your Parochial measures had been more fully matured", they were annoyed at the prediction by some outside St. John's that the experiment would now collapse, and were:

... determined to encrease their diligence and vindicate the wisdom and excellence of your plans by rendering them successful, and of showing that there practicability does not depend on your guiding their operations.¹ This I can assure you is a very general feeling at present.

This regret at Chalmers' impending departure coupled with a belief in divine providence guiding and protecting their future, were obvious in many letters to Chalmers from the agents, parishioners, and members of the congregation in the course of 1823.² Only one of those letters expressed doubts as to the continuation of Chalmers' work without Chalmers himself, its "tutelary angel", directing it.³ Among the correspondence that has survived, however, the sentiments of this letter were exceptional.

It was not until November 1823 that Chalmers actually left the parish. His farewell sermon was a very emotional occasion, and bore

1. C.P., CHA 4.24.80, 20 January 1823, W. Collins to T. Chalmers.

2. Namely, C.P., CHA 4.28.1, 23 January 1823, Ann Naismith (female worker); C.P., CHA 4.9.36, 25 January 1823, J. Sommerville (Deacon); St. A.U.L., MS. 30385.295, 26 January 1823, J. Fraser (parishioner); C.P., CHA 4.30.33, 6 February 1823, J. Wilson (elder); CHA 4.29.3, 4 November 1823, H. Rainy (elder); St. A.U.L., MS. 30385.396, 7 November 1823, J. Hunter (parishioner); MS. 30385.289, 9 November 1823, Barbara Fleming (female worker); MS. 30385.296, 11 November 1823, J.H. Freeland; MS.30385.279, 10 November 1823, G. Ewing (Dissenter); C.P., CHA 4.27.39, 11 November 1823, D. MacLeod (hearer); C.P., CHA 4.29.25, 3 December 1823, J. Scouller (Sabbath School Teacher); C.P., CHA 4.29.9, 14 December 1823, B. Robertson; St.A.U.L. MS. 30385.327, 25 December 1823, D. Gilmour (parishioner); all to T. Chalmers. The large volume of this correspondence was to continue after Chalmers left in November 1823, ranging from 11 to 57 letters a year up to 1834, and then falling off sharply.

3. C.P., CHA 4.24.11, 29 January 1823, anonymous from "A constant hearer" to T. Chalmers.

witness to the general feeling his words and actions had evoked amongst Christians in Glasgow.¹ Chalmers gave a tangible farewell present to all the agents, including his female helpers, in the shape of a copy of a recently published volume of sermons, personally inscribed, and a letter thanking them for their services.² The deacons were also given a copy of his Statement in regard to the Pauperism of Glasgow, From the experience of the last eight years.

Another reason for the overwhelming optimism of that work, as outlined in the previous chapter³, was obviously to act as a continual reminder and encouragement to the deacons of the feasibility and facility of the poor relief side of the St. John's parochial experiment.

Once Chalmers had left the parish on 12 November 1823, the first obvious hurdle the agents had to overcome was the election of a suitable successor. Their assumption that they would have a say in the naming of that successor was one more indication of the rising tide of evangelicalism in Glasgow which had been reinforced by Chalmers' own reputation in the city and abroad, and which had precedents in Chalmers' original elections to the Tron and St. John's and in other elections to parishes in Glasgow.⁴ However, in this particular case, the desire to have a say in Chalmers' successor led

1. Farewell Memorial of Dr. Chalmers, (3rd edition, Glasgow, 1823), pp. 6-7: C.P., CHA 5.1.28.

2. C.P., CHA 4.29.25, 3 December 1823, J. Scouller (Sabbath School Teacher) to T. Chalmers.

3. See above, pp. 144-8.

4. For example, the Outer High church in 1819, see above, p. 64; and St. Georges, 1823. Chalmers' personal influence in the election of Glasgow ministers continued after 1823, his advice being sought by individual town councillors. For example, C.P., CHA 4.71.60, 28 April 1827, D. Cuthbertson to T. Chalmers, concerning the vacancy in St. David's, Glasgow; 4.205.25, 7 February 1833, J. Geddes to T. Chalmers and 4.203.1, 16 March 1833, R. Dalglish to T. Chalmers, concerning the vacancy in the Tron, Glasgow.

to a division within the agency over the most suitable candidate.

Between November 1823 and the end of July 1824, St. John's parish was vacant. The inability of the elders in particular to agree on any one candidate was largely a result of their fears that the moral, religious and social experiment in St. John's might collapse if the wrong man were appointed, and all their hard work of the previous four years go to waste.¹ Indeed, this fear communicated itself to the candidates and discouraged many of them.² The town council was left in an embarrassing quandary. In the end, it was Chalmers' supporters on the council of that year, James Cleland and Robert Dalglish, who stepped in to provide a suitable candidate for St. John's.³ Finally, Patrick McFarlan (1781-1849), who promised specifically to continue the poor relief side of the St. John's experiment was unanimously

1. C.P., CHA 5.2.77, 13 November and 15 December 1823, Meetings concerning a successor to Chalmers: Seven elders voted for Thomas Brown of Tongland, eight for Dr. John Russell of Muthill and four abstained. CHA 4.27.53, 29 November 1823, M. Montgomerie; CHA 4.29.51 and 53, 1 and 20 December 1823, D. Stow; CHA 4.28.34 and 37, 16 and 18 December 1823, H. Paul; St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.234 and 235, 16 and 19 December 1823, W. Collins; MS. 30385.310, 25 December 1823, P. Falconer; all to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.26.27 and 29, 3 February and 31 March 1823, Dr. Robert Gordon (Edinburgh); CHA 4.29.18 and 20, 24 March and 18 August 1823, Dr. John Russell (Muthill); CHA., 4.26.43, 10 April 1823, James Henderson (Edinburgh, chapel); St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.235, 19 December 1823, W. Collins concerning one of the candidates, Wilson (Edinburgh); C.P., CHA 4.30.28, 23 December 1823 and 4.40.12 and 14, 10 January and 3 February 1824, A. Wilson - Wilson was proposed by Chalmers as a compromise candidate when the great divisions in the agency had become apparent; CHA 4.37.44, 8 January 1824, H. Paul; CHA 4.32.28, 13 January 1824, and St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.201, 10 January 1824, J. Cleland; C.P., CHA 4.32.12, 29 January 1824, C. Chalmers: CHA 4.33.6, 20 March 1824, R. Dalglish; all to T. Chalmers; and G.B.R., 23 March 1824.

3. This can be seen from the correspondence with Chalmers over the next few months, i.e., C.P., CHA 4.32.29, 31, 32 and 35, 12 February, 5 and 18 March and 13 April 1824, J. Cleland to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.33.4, 6 and 8, 9 February, 20 March and 10 April 1824, R. Dalglish to T. Chalmers.

elected by the town council on 20 April 1824.¹ The intervening delay had been damaging, however. To many, it had confirmed their apprehension that the St. John's experiment was a complicated one, requiring special talents and stamina; for a while it had split the St. John's agency; and, potentially most damaging of all, the parish which Chalmers had moulded to receive the maximum pastoral care available, had been left without its shepherd for eight months.

The immediate and most obvious impact on St. John's parish of Chalmers' departure and the problem of a successor, was a decline in the size of the congregation. The collections and seat rents fell off accordingly², and that was another urgent reason that the rapid appointment of a successor was considered so vital by kirk session and town council alike. Immediately after McFarlan was appointed, the seats in St. John's started to be let with something of their former popularity.³ The impact of the decreased collections on the poor fund for the parish will be considered alongside the financial figures for the experiment as a whole.⁴ As regards the work of the deacons themselves all the available evidence points to their determination to continue their poor relief work as normal, even with no minister in the parish.⁵ As December 1823 closed and 1824 opened, the messages in the agents' letters to Chalmers were similar: Deacons Court

1. C.P., CHA 4.32.37, 20 April 1824, J. Cleland to T. Chalmers; 4.36.8, 19 April 1824, P. McFarlan to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.40.36, 8 January 1824, CHA 4.36.26, 17 January 1824, J. McVey to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.36.64, 10 February 1824, W. Muir to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.38.1, 28 February 1824, H. Rainy to T. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 4.32.39, 3 May 1824, J. Cleland to T. Chalmers.

4. See below, p. 202.

5. C.P., CHA 4.30.13, 29 November 1823, E. Walkinshaw to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.30.27, 1 December 1823, A. Williamson to T. Chalmers; St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.205, 1 December 1823, J. King Clerk to T. Chalmers; C.P., CHA 4.29.44, 2 December 1823, J. Sommerville to T. Chalmers.

meetings were being well attended, cases of poor relief were still being dealt with rigorously and scrupulously, and the determination to continue and fulfill Chalmers' plans had not abated.¹ One of the elders summed up this general attitude and confidence:

... the system goes on a marvielle; and really I am beginning to think that it is not a machine requiring a steam engine to keep it in motion, but rather that it is a piece of mechanism, more of the nature of a perpetual motion, and would advance as a day clock, the faster, the heavier the going;²

How would McFarlan himself react to such an autonomous mechanism for the conduct of his new parish's poor relief? To answer this it will be useful to look at his background. He was the son of the Rev. John Warden McFarlan from the Canongate in Edinburgh. This was the same John McFarlan who wrote the study on poor relief which was examined in chapter one as in many ways a precursor of Chalmers' thoughts and eventual principles for good poor relief management.³ Patrick seems to have followed his father in adopting similar attitudes, although unfortunately he never published anything on the subject.

Prior to his election, McFarlan had made it clear that although he had no doubts as regards the soundness of the St. John's poor relief scheme, he did wonder if he had the ability to prolong and advance it, given the internal divisions over the appointment of a

1. St.A.U.L., MS 30385.78, 8 December 1823, J. Burns to T. Chalmers; MS. 30385.120, 19 December 1823, W. Buchanan to T. Chalmers; C.P., CHA 4.36.26, 17 January 1824, J. McVey to T. Chalmers; St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.58, 9 February 1824, A. Buchanan to T. Chalmers; C.P., CHA 4.40.25, 24 February 1824, R. Wodrow to T. Chalmers.

2. St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.99, 15 April 1824, A. Buchanan to T. Chalmers.

3. See above, pp. 12-13.

minister and the decline in the congregation and collections for poor relief. He was inducted to St. John's on 29 July 1824, and he kept up a frequent correspondence with Chalmers during his brief incumbency there. In the middle of August he wrote to Chalmers that as yet he did not feel at home in the pulpit or the parish, but was hopeful on both counts. His letter deserves quotation for the confirmation it contains of the smooth administration of the poor relief system during these months when the living had been vacant. Although he had already begun visiting the sick, McFarlan observed:

I am not a little surprised at finding so few interruptions from the secular business of the parish. Except a few Government Certificates and an application for an Infirmary recommendation, I have literally had nothing to do in that way. Not one pauper has applied to me. I have to thank you and the Agency for that, and I trust that as long as I am minister of St. John's I shall experience the same happy exemption.¹

Thus the system inaugurated by Chalmers of division of secular and spiritual labour in the parish appears not only to have survived his absence but even endured a period without any minister. McFarlan added that he had attended meetings of the Deacons' Courts and recorded his reactions:

I had heard of storms - but there was a perfect calm. In point of tenderings for the poor, and patience in investigating and discussing their claims, I feel as if I were still at Polmont.²

He added that he would continue to attend their monthly meetings so as he would be able "to reply to the opponents of the system", and spoke optimistically of other parishes adopting it.

Thus in two brief weeks it would seem that any doubts McFarlan had entertained had been allayed. Three months later one of the St.

1. C.P., CHA 4.36.11, 16 August 1824, P. McFarlan to T. Chalmers.

2. Ibid. When it is considered that the population of Polmont was only one quarter that of St. John's in 1821 - 2,171 (N.S.A., vol. 8, pp. 195-6), then McFarlan's statement gives some indication of how efficient the deacons were in relieving the minister of St. John's from the administration of poor relief.

John's elders, John Wilson, wrote to Chalmers. His letter indicated that McFarlan was still enamoured of the parochial set-up, mainly because of the work of the deacons:

... the zeal the vigilance and the penetration exercised by them in discharging their duty he is now set completely at ease as to that matter.¹

The first hint that the continuity of parochial life was to be yet again disturbed by a change in minister came at the end of March 1825. William Collins wrote to Chalmers informing him that there was some speculation that McFarlan would be appointed to the vacant Glasgow parish of St. Enoch's.² The reasoning behind such rumours was yet more evidence of the growing strength of the evangelicals in the city. It seemed that the St. Enochs' congregation was not particularly evangelical but liked McFarlan, and so the Glasgow Evangelicals and their town council supporters believed that if McFarlan did not transfer there St. Enochs might be lost to a Moderate minister. At the same time they were confident that the strength of commitment was so strong in St. John's that an evangelical minister would be sure to be found for it in the event of McFarlan accepting the move.

McFarlan wrote to Chalmers to tell him that there was substance to the rumours about his leaving St. John's. As yet he was reluctant, mainly because the St. John's affairs had so far gone "so smoothly".³ He did mention a point in favour of his moving - that is, to establish the parochial system in St. Enoch's and so increase the evidence in its favour.

As 1825 progressed it became apparent that McFarlan was indeed the only acceptable Evangelical minister to the St. Enoch's

1. C.P., CHA 4.40.20, November 1824, J. Wilson to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.42.42, 29 March 1825, W. Collins to T. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 4.46.12, 11 April 1825, P. McFarlan to T. Chalmers.

congregation. Thus exactly two years after Chalmers' farewell sermon, his successor also addressed the St. John's congregation for the last time. In the intervening months the St. John's pressure group and supporters in the council had once more ensured the continuation of the poor relief system in the parish, and had promises of a suitable successor being appointed.¹ McFarlan also assured Chalmers that even if he did leave St. John's :

... I can perceive no abatement in the zeal either of Elders or Deacons in favour of the System ... there is nothing they wish so much as the establishment of the system in another of the City parishes.²

Apart from these testimonies by the deacons themselves and McFarlan, there is some statistical evidence for the deacon's work in St. John's during these first two years after Chalmers' departure. Once more, the surviving sources placed the poor in different categories, making direct comparison with the first four years of the experiment difficult. It will be recalled from chapter four that, according to the kirk session records, there were 100 regular paupers in the parish between the end of September 1822 and September 1823, including four foundlings and two lunatics, plus 38 occasional poor. Chalmers also claimed that there were only thirteen new paupers in St. John's by June 1823, but it was argued in chapter four that this figure is questionable.³ During the first year of Chalmers absence, September 1823 to September 1824, the number of regular paupers fell from 100 to 88, including three foundlings and two lunatics. The records stated that in the course of that year sixteen had been struck off due to death or the deacons deciding they

1. C.P., CHA 4.48.40 and 42, 19 and 29 April 1825, J. Paul to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.43.3, 15 August 1825, R. Dalglish to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.46.18, 29 August 1825, P. McFarlan to T. Chalmers.

3. See above, pp. 145-7, 152-3.

were no longer in need of assistance; five paupers had left the parish, and ten had come in from other parishes. However, from a study of the sources it is apparent that at least 29 of the September 1824 total of 88 were new regular sessional poor since September 1823.¹ In other words, although the overall figure for sessional poor was continuing to fall, the total once more hid more than it revealed. The old pre-1819 sessional poor must have been dying off or being struck off at a greater rate than new cases were having to be relieved, but if the number of cases continued to rise there would come a point where it would be difficult for the session to provide for them all. Certainly, these numbers show that Chalmers' boast in June 1823 of only thirteen new cases since the experiment had begun no longer applied.

In addition to those regular pensioners, the St. John's session relieved between 30 and 32 casual/occasional poor between September 1823 and September 1824, at a cost of £12.16.0.² The number of such poor had thus fallen from the 38 of the previous year, but their cost had actually increased by 2s.6d., from £12.13.6. As was seen in chapter four, this practice of relieving occasional poor may not have cost much, but it once more meant that the actual numbers receiving

1. This figure of twenty-nine emerges from a study and comparison of two sources: 1. C.P., CHA 5.2.87, State of Paupers 30 September 1824, gives fourteen new Deacons' cases in the western part of the parish for the past year. 2. C.P., CHA 5.2.89, St. John's Chapel Parish 1 January 1825, list of Paupers in each proportion and expense for 1824, gives fifteen new cases for the chapel district - although by January 1825, three of those fifteen had been struck off and one had died, which would reduce the total figure of new cases for church and chapel between September 1823 and January 1825 from twenty-nine to twenty-five.

2. S.R.A., CH2/176.8, St. John's Session Minutes, secular affairs, 1819-25, 2 May 1825, p. 75; C.P., CHA 5.1.29, Abstract of the Survey of St. John's Parish Glasgow June 1825; CHA 5.2.89, St. John's Chapel Parish January 1825, List of Paupers in each proportion and expense for 1824.

official help of any kind were in fact greater than those publicly acknowledged.

It would appear that the agents themselves were concerned over the numbers of paupers in the parish, and during their annual survey of the parish in September 1824 a concerted effort was made to reduce these figures. Of the 88 regular poor cited above, 58 - including three foundlings - were from the western district, and 30 from the chapel.¹ The new minister reported this to Chalmers. Unfortunately, he only gave the figures for the western part of the parish, and excluded that area covered by the chapel. McFarlan stated that, excluding foundlings, there were 50 paupers, and added that by the end of November 1824 this had been reduced by thirteen to 37. Only one of the 13 had moved out of the parish, the rest had been struck off after deacon's inquiries as "improper objects of sessional bounty".² So much for Chalmers' promise in 1819 that the 'old' poor would continue to be provided for out of the church collections. Among the surviving 37 were twenty-three widows, six spinsters, four couples, two foundlings and one deserted child. Even McFarlan was hesitant about endorsing such pruning of a system that was already supposed to be operating at a minimum level :

I confess I was a little startled at the greatness of the reduction in our roll when it was first proposed. Of some of the cases we could have no doubt as to the propriety of striking them off. It was a shame to the relatives of the paupers that they were ever visited - but I fear that the Deacons appointed to scrutinise them in one or two instances which I have since heard of been rather severe. But this is inter nos, and I feel so much confidence in their tenderness to the poor that I think it more probable that I am in the wrong.³

The chapel district had followed suit, and had struck off four

1. C.P., CHA 5.2.87, State of Paupers 30 September 1824.

2. C.P., CHA 4.36.15, 29 November 1824, P. McFarlan to T. Chalmers.

3. Ibid.

regular pensioners by January 1825, three more dying and two leaving the parish - a total reduction of nine.¹ As a result of these activities, the number of regular poor by June 1825 was lower than the 1823 - 4 figure : 75 as opposed to 83 (excluding foundlings and lunatics in both cases). However, the number of occasional poor was already up 50% on the total 1823-4 figure: 48 as opposed to 32, and there were still four more months to run before a full year had passed.²

Thus the overall total of regular poor excluding foundlings and lunatics, had fallen 20.21% from 94 to 75 between September 1823 and June 1825. This had been accomplished by yet another rigorous scrutiny over which the minister at least had had some reservations. No evidence survives to indicate that there was any follow-up by the deacons to ensure that those struck off did in fact manage to survive adequately independently of session help. In addition, the number of occasional poor had risen 26.31% from 38 to 48, with four months to go before the end of the session's financial year. It may have been that the deacons were deliberately more 'liberal' with occasional handouts because of their more rigorous check on those entering the session roll as regular pensioners. Whatever way these statistics are looked at, it is obvious the poor relief system was not yet home and dry on the eve of the departure of Chalmers' first successor in the parish.

At the same time, it must be said that the poor relief experiment had obviously survived a particularly fraught year as regards falling collections, lack of leadership and internal quarrels among the elders. In that sense the deacons had more than proved themselves as willing participants and believers in it. For example, in January

1. C.P., CHA 5.2.89, St. John's Chapel Parish January 1825.

2. C.P., CHA 5.1.29, Abstract of the Survey of St. John's Parish Glasgow June 1825.

1824 the deacon John McVey wrote to Chalmers and described a recent rise in applications for relief at a time when the church door collections were "very small". He went on to write:

... but this teaches us the propriety of a judicious application of them ...

He added that, as a now more experienced body, the deacons were better qualified to ensure their distribution only "to the proper objects".¹

By November 1824 the session treasurer and elder John Wilson, wrote informing Chalmers that the overall funds for the year were down £66; but they were coping, and the collections, with McFarlan's appointment had been steadily increasing.² This was borne out by the kirk session records for these years: the balance for 1823-1824 was only £30 down on the previous year's, and was still a healthy sum of £164. 13. 0.³ It was with some justification, therefore, that one of the deacons, William Craig, wrote to Chalmers in June 1825 that the pauperism of the parish "is in a most flourishing condition as to decrease".⁴

In these first years after Chalmers' departure, there was also some reorganisation of the parish. By June 1825 there were 27 proportions instead of the original 25. Unfortunately no geographical descriptions of the new boundaries have survived. Twenty-four of these districts had elders, five more having been ordained on 7 April 1825.⁵ However, three of those five were already deacons in the parish and continued in that role.⁶ Twenty-three proportions had

1. C.P., CHA 4.36.26, 17 January 1824, J. McVey to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.40.20, November 1824, J. Wilson to T. Chalmers.

3. S.R.A., CH2/176.8, St. John's Session Minutes, 2 May 1825, p. 78.

4. C.P., CHA 4.2.63, 25 June 1825, W. Craig to T. Chalmers.

5. C.P., CHA 5.1.29, Abstract of the Survey of St. John's, June 1825; S.R.O., CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 7 April 1825, the five were: William Craig (merchant), William Buchanan (calenderer), James Playfair (merchant), James Wilson (surgeon) and Joseph Brown (dyer).

6. C.P., CHA 5.1.29, Abstract of the Survey of St. John's, June 1825. The first three names in footnote 5 were already deacons.

individual deacons - two more having been ordained in April 1825.¹

As was the case in the first four years of the experiment, little evidence of the conduct of individual poor relief cases which were admitted on to the rolls during McFarlan's incumbency has survived, nor indeed of those parishioners who were not granted relief. Only two of the former cases are documented, but they are both interesting examples. The first related to the situation of a widow named McInlay, brought to Chalmers' personal attention in August 1823 by the elder, Mr. Ramsay.² In February 1824 one of Chalmers' female workers, Sophia Gilfillan whose brother Peter was a deacon, wrote to keep Chalmers up to date with the widow's condition. From this letter it is apparent that Chalmers had personally sent £2 to Miss Gilfillan for her to use at her discretion to help the widow. Miss Gilfillan wrote that the family had work, and although it brought in little money, she was impressed by the way the widow was able to keep them in a "decent and orderly appearance". The elder, Mr. Ramsay, visited often and personally added sixpence a week to the sessional allowance of 2/-. In keeping with Chalmers' philosophy of not encouraging people's weaknesses, Miss Gilfillan had decided that to give them any of Chalmers' £2 donation would have been "inexpedient". Rather, she intended to wait until their house rent of £7 was due.³

1. The names of these two, Andrew Tennent and W. Davie, do not appear in the kirk session records; they are mentioned in a letter, C.P., CHA 4.50.8, 19 March 1825, J. Thomson to T. Chalmers, and are also in the list of deacons in the June 1825 Survey. CHA 5.1.29

2. See above, pp. 172-3, below, p. 232; also C.P., CHA 4.29.4, 19 August 1823, W. Ramsay to T. Chalmers.

3. St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.364, 4 February 1824, Sophia Gilfillan to T. Chalmers.

The claimant in the second case whose history has survived, was one Helen Spence, who personally wrote to Chalmers after he had left the parish. She was a St. John's parishioner, and apparently Chalmers had visited her when her son had been killed in a foundry in February 1821. Now her husband had died after a lengthy illness, and had left her with six children and in arrears of rent. Still, she was reluctant to apply for sessional relief, but rather was writing for a character reference from Chalmers to give a Glasgow philanthropist Mr. James Fyfe, who apparently was known to help such cases as hers.¹

One of the deacons, Mr. R. Reid, wrote to Chalmers a week later having been asked by him to investigate the situation. He was actually reluctant to offer Chalmers any advice on the case, asserting that he was sure Chalmers knew better than himself what should be done in such a case. He also added that Mrs. Spence had, and rightly so, gone into cheaper accommodation and seemed "a respectable woman".² Whether Chalmers gave the testimonial or not is unknown.

Both these incidents reveal Chalmers' personal involvement with some of his poorer parishioners, albeit the respectable amongst them, even after he had actually left the parish. The McInlay case also demonstrates the private help given by the elder involved in the form of 6d. a week out of his own pocket. Once more this raises the question of whether the elders or deacons would have the means to provide such supplements in every instance that they were required to eke out the sessional pension once it had eventually been granted.

One other group of claimants that the St. John's kirk session had assumed responsibility for was the Town's Hospital poor who had become

1. C.P., CHA 4.39.13, 20 February 1824, Helen Spence to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.38.4, 2 March 1824, M. Robertson Reid to T. Chalmers.

pensioners of that body before the St. John's parish had begun to function.¹ In April 1821 the St. John's session had appointed a committee to examine the lists of such poor provided by the Hospital. The committee reported back that after investigation they rejected several names from the hospital list, but agreed to provide the money for the relief of the others, the actual money still to be distributed to the paupers by the Hospital.² On 7 March 1822 the Hospital agreed to the revised list, and to St. John's terms of management. It was also agreed that if ever the St. John's collections fell, the Hospital would once more foot the bill for these Hospital pensioners.³ Three years later, in February 1825, the deacons of St. John's conducted a scrutiny of all these pre-1819 out-door pensioners from St. John's parish who were still on the Hospital roll and receiving their money from the session. As a result, the deacons discovered some misapplication of the funds in particular cases, and decided to ask the Hospital that they all be put under St. John's management. Once more, Dalglish intervened to use his influence on behalf of the parish. This time it was to persuade the managers of the Hospital to agree to the St. John's suggestion. McFarlan wrote to Chalmers asking his opinion of the wisdom of doing this. He was worried in case "some dearth or other public calamity" might make it difficult in the future to carry it out. In other words, the parish would have to give up the right to hand such poor back if their collections fell. On the whole, McFarlan was optimistic, however, since he was confident that the strict scrutiny the deacons would conduct regularly

1. See above, pp. 146-7.

2. S.R.A., CH2/176.8, St. John's Session Minutes, 4 March 1822, p. 20; G.T.H.M., 17 May 1821.

3. G.T.H.M., 21 February and 7 March 1822.

and the natural wastage by death and removal from the parish would ensure that the numbers of such poor would continue to decline.¹

By March 1825 it was apparent that the transfer of these cases had in fact taken place. Collins reported to Chalmers that there was by then only one indoor pensioner. The Hospital had listed twenty-two pensioners in all, but when examined by the deacons it was found that two of those were in fact dead. As Collins wryly remarked, "So much for the good management of all of us". Of the remaining twenty, six had been cut off "as being quite out of the need of any support", and according to Collins the six in question were not annoyed but rather "wondered why we had continued so long".² Of the remaining fourteen the allowance of one was increased, three were decreased, and ten left intact.³ The sum effect of this was to reduce the Hospital poor chargeable to St. John's from £82 a year to £46 - and this was in March 1825. It will be important to remember this when it comes to examining Chalmers' reasons for the experiment coming to an end in 1837 - one of those reasons being the burden imposed on the sessional finances of these Hospital cases.

Despite the fact that it had been discovered in the course of investigating the Hospital pensioners that some of them were not fit objects for relief, the deacons' involvement in that incident and their willingness to assume responsibility for their future management were yet more signs of their general mood of confidence and control during these initial years after Chalmers' departure. Another sign of this was the fact that it was seriously considered at that time that

1. C.P., CHA 4.46.10, 11 February 1825, P. McFarlan to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.42.34, 1 March 1825, W. Collins to T. Chalmers.

3. S.R.A., CH2/176.8, St. John's Session Minutes, 7 March 1825, p. 61.

the St. John's session assume the cost of all medical relief hitherto provided to St. John's inhabitants by the Hospital. (It would appear from this that although from 1819 individual St. John's parishioners were barred from receiving poor relief from the Town's Hospital, they could apply for and did receive medical aid.) The total cost of such medical relief was estimated by the session at £30 a year. McFarlan's personal opinion was that it would be more beneficial to the parish to spend such a sum on education within the parish. The kirk session records reveal that in the end the majority of the session agreed with this, and nothing further was done about the medical relief.¹ This incident is yet one more confirmation that at least in the first couple of years of the St. John's poor relief experiment's operation without Chalmers at the helm, the system was operating on similar lines to before, and, to all intents and purposes, was a financial success. As was pointed out above, there were some indications that it might run into trouble in the future, but the deacons and elders themselves seem to have been oblivious to them.

It will be remembered from chapter four, that an important corollary to the poor relief side of the St. John's experiment was the spiritual as well as the material welfare of the parishioners, the former reinforcing and ensuring the latter.² Once more, the evidence arising from the correspondence of individual elders to Chalmers bears testimony to their continued concern over the souls in their charge even without Chalmers on the scene. The new pastor also wrote to Chalmers for advice and reassurance as regards the spiritual

1. Ibid., 4 April 1825, p. 63.

2. See above, pp. 133-6.

interests of the parish. For example, after a couple of months in Glasgow he decided to launch a major campaign to fill the seven vacancies in the eldership. He also agreed to divide one of the proportions into two, after the elder concerned had persuaded him that the original one was too cumbersome. In this letter to Chalmers McFarlan asked for his reaction to allowing the elders themselves to recommend candidates for the eldership, as he himself was still in the process of becoming acquainted with the congregation. He also asked Chalmers' opinion on some of the deacons also acting as elders.¹

Unfortunately, Chalmers' replies to such letters have not survived. However, letters from elders to Chalmers confirm the fact that they did recommend new elders, and, as has been pointed out, three of the deacons did assume the office of eldership at that time.²

Five months later McFarlan reported to Chalmers that he was in fact finding it difficult to fill all the vacancies in the eldership. More alarming, although he was enjoying visiting the parish he was "grieved" at:

... the irreligion and spiritual indifference of the parish far greater than I had anticipated - and my anticipations were not flattering.³

By the beginning of April 1825, however, five more elders were ordained, bringing the total to twenty-four out of a potential of twenty-seven.⁴ This seems to have cheered McFarlan, so that when he wrote to Chalmers four days after their ordination, he said that the

1. C.P., CHA 4.36.13, 6 September 1824, P. McFarlan to T. Chalmers.

2. See p. 202, footnotes 5 and 6.

3. C.P., CHA 4.46.10, 11 February 1825, P. McFarlan to T. Chalmers.

4. S.R.O., CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 7 April 1825.

St. Enoch's offer had come at a time when he felt settled in St. John's.¹ At least five of the elders in their correspondence with Chalmers backed this up, and stated that his pastoral work in the parish was impressive.²

Yet the other source of evidence for the spiritual growth and state of the parish accorded more with McFarlan's pessimistic view of it. In June 1825 the results of the annual parish visitation were drawn up in tabular form. From this source it is apparent that the population of the parish had risen to 10,231, with 2,255 families. 2,889, or 28.24% of that population held church seats, and represented an estimated 1,301 families. However, of those seats, only 43.64%, 1,261 seats, were in the Established Church of Scotland, and of those only 201 were in St. John's church and 449 in the chapel, representing 1.96% and 4.39% of the population respectively. Thus a total of 6.35% of the population of the parish held seats in either the parish church or chapel.³ This figure was appreciably greater than that for 1819 before the experiment had begun, when an estimated one in one hundred held seats in St. John's church itself, with 63 holding seats in their former parish church of the Tron.⁴ On the other hand, after six years of intense parochial effort, 650 seat-holders out of a parish of 10,000 individuals was not the great impact that had been originally promised and expected. Indeed, the proportion of seat-holders in all

1. C.P., CHA 4.46.12, 11 April 1825, P. McFarlan to T. Chalmers.

2. Namely, C.P., CHA 4.39.58, 16 September 1824, J. Thomson to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.37.18, 17 September 1824, H. Paul to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.40.20, November 1824, J. Wilson to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.42.38 and 48, 19 March and 18 May 1825, W. Collins to T. Chalmers; St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.313, 21 May 1825, R. Falconer to T. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 5.1.29, Abstract of Survey of St. John's, June 1825.

4. C.P., CHA 5.1.16, Description of St. John's, 1819.

the churches situated in the parish had fallen slightly over the six years, from 28.34% to 28.24%, and it is estimated that the number of families with no seats in any church had in fact risen from 845 in 1819 to 954 by 1825.¹

Non-attendance at church is not of course the only indication of the spiritual state of a particular area. However, the above statistics and the views of those members of the agency who wrote to Chalmers on the subject form the bulk of surviving and tangible evidence on which any conclusions can be drawn. Certainly the kirk session records reveal that during McFarlan's time in the parish, the cheaper seats in the parish church, specifically set out for the poorer sections of its parochial community were in fact unlet.² In September after the June 1825 survey, McFarlan and the session in fact petitioned the council and magistrates for a further reduction in the rents of those areas- notably, the upper pews in the galleries. They backed up their petition by asserting:

That a good part of the population of St. John's parish consists of Weavers and other operatives, or their widows and children, whose earnings run from 5 to 10 shillings per week, that it is well known to your Memorialists that many of these individuals have no sittings in any place of worship. And that the high price of seats in the Churches, Chapels and Meeting Houses of the City, is assigned by them as one cause of their neglect of divine service.³

It was also recommended that forty free sittings be provided for the parish paupers. The reduction in the seat rents of the galleries was granted by the council on this occasion⁴, but the fact that the

1. Ibid.: in the 1819 Description it was estimated that there were 2.22 seats per family that held any sittings in the Established church. If this estimate is applied to the figures in the 1825 survey, C.P., CHA 5.1.29, and adjusting it for the total population change of 10,304 in 1819 to 10,231 in 1825, then the number of families with no seats in any church in 1825 was 954, as opposed to 845 in 1819.

2. S.R.O., CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 5 September 1825.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., 7 September 1829.

council controlled such fees was a drawback that must be considered when analysing the efforts of such sessions as St. John's in their efforts to reach their parishioners. Be that as it may, the fact remains that after six years in operation the St. John's parochial experiment certainly did not leave behind any overwhelming evidence of a mass Christian re-awakening among its inhabitants. Religious indifference still appeared to predominate, and Chalmers' parish ideal seemed to be some distance away.

The interval between McFarlan's removal to St. Enoch's and the appointment of a successor was far briefer - only three months - than that between Chalmers and McFarlan. This second election was not without incident, but the agency itself did not appear to be as fraught with division as it had been on that former occasion. Interestingly, the two candidates in 1825-6 had also been suggested in 1824 - John Russell of Muthill and Thomas Brown of Tongland. On this occasion, Russell was favoured by most of the parish agency, but once more he vacillated.¹ He eventually declined the position, and the field was left clear for Brown, who was unanimously elected by the town council on 21 February 1826.² Chalmers' influential Glasgow friends - on this occasion C.S. Parker and R. Dalglish - were once more involved in this election, as was Chalmers himself, but as has been pointed out, there was not the urgency nor division on this

1. C.P., CHA 4.50.63, 29 November 1825, J. Wilson to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.43.5, 31 December 1825, R. Dalglish to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.58.17, 11 January 1826, P. McFarlan to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.55.55, 13 January 1826, P. Falconer to T. Chalmers.

2. G.B.R., 21 February 1826; C.P., CHA 4.60.30, 22 February 1826, H. Paul to T. Chalmers.

occasion that had existed in 1824.¹

The general feeling among the agency after Brown had been elected their pastor was one of satisfaction, and pleasure at the fact that he openly favoured their parish structure.² Brown was particularly in favour of the poor relief side of that organisation. Born in 1776, he went to Tongland, a small country parish, in 1807 and was there for nineteen years. His path does not seem to have crossed Chalmers' until the St. John's election, but Chalmers wrote to him in March 1826 offering him help and information about the parish, as he had done with McFarlan two years before. Brown sent a grateful reply, but added that although he intended to continue Chalmers' policies in St. John's he was apprehensive:

... for I think you have made it appear both in theory and practice that the parish is assimilated as much as can be to a parish in the Country.

He knew that the St. John's agents were committed to the parish:

... but it may be different when stranger after stranger enters into your labours. It shall however be my constant aim to do what I can promote the spiritual well being of those people amongst whom Providence sends me.³

Brown's evangelical commitment was apparent in this letter, as was his determination to carry on St. John's in Chalmers' practices,

1. C.P., CHA 4.50.63, 29 November 1825, J. Wilson to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.48.30, 9 December 1825, C.S.Parker to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.43.5 and 4.55.1, 31 December 1825 and 15 February 1826, R. Dalglish to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.60.28, 28 January 1826, H. Paul to T. Chalmers, in which Paul urged Chalmers to write to Dalglish and Alexander McGregor, a St. John's deacon and a town councillor, in favour of Brown; Chalmers also asked for a character reference on Brown from F.W. Grant (Banff), CHA 4.56.63, 25 March 1826.

2. C.P., CHA 4.59.63, 25 February 1826, M. Montgomerie to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.60.6, 1 April 1826, Catherine Paul to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.52.22, 7 April 1826, R. Brown to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.64.21, 1 May 1826, J. Wilson to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.54.13, 11 April 1826, W. Collins to T. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 4.52.30, 18 March 1826, T. Brown to T. Chalmers. Brown's former parish of Tongland had a population of only 890 in 1821, falling to 800 by 1831 (N.S.A., vol. 4, p. 93) - his move to the large city parish of St. John's must have been a daunting one.

yet it is also clear that he had his eyes open when he entered the parish. For the moment, it looked as though the experiment was once more on stable ground, and the future looked optimistic. Yet, as Brown had pointed out, it must have been difficult for ministers to come to St. John's as themselves. As Henry Paul, the elder, wrote to Chalmers in April 1826, he and all the agents were disappointed that Chalmers was unable to preach at Brown's admission to the parish "as we still regard you as the head of the parish".¹

Like McFarlan before him, Brown seems to have settled down quickly, and attracted full congregations. The latter fact helped build up the collections, which had once more suffered from the lack of a regular parish minister.² Even so, the parish as a whole still had a surplus balance in its total accounts of £130 in April 1826 when Brown took over, and with his straightforward evangelical sermons he was able to draw in hearers and so maintain that balance even in the summer months when many wealthy families left Glasgow for the coast.³ Nonetheless, this balance was to be eaten into over the next few years. As an industrial depression hit the city not long after Brown's arrival, St. John's parish began to feel its effects:

This is a trying time in the affairs of the Parish of St. John from the great distress amongst the manufacturing Population. Much is doing by individuals, but not more than the occasion requires.⁴

John Wilson, another elder, wrote to Chalmers at the same time complaining that ever since it had been announced in Glasgow that a

1. C.P., CHA 4.60.32, 29 April 1826, H. Paul to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.60.34, 6 July 1826, H. Paul to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.84.21, 1 February 1827, H. Rainy to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.83.5, 5 February 1827, H. Paul to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.76.11, 11 May 1827, G. Heggie to T. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 4.54.17, 11 April 1826, W. Collins to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.60.34, 6 July 1826, H. Paul to T. Chalmers.

4. C.P., CHA 4.59.45, 5 May 1826, M. Montgomerie to T. Chalmers.

subscription was being raised for the unemployed poor "an host of them is coming forward and all in greater distress than another".¹ Joseph Somerville, minister of St. John's chapel, referred to:

... the unexampled length and severity of the crisis of distress in which the country and especially Glasgow is now labouring.²

The practical result for the chapel, more dependant than the parish church on the lower classes due to its eastern position in the parish, was a fall in its seat-letting. According to Somerville this decline in the church-attendance of the working classes was a common phenomenon in the city as a whole. He philosophically added:

But one must just wait³ patiently for the turning of the tide and more prosperous times.

All of these letters indicate an awareness of the depression in the city, but at the same time the overriding concern appears to have been with the necessity not to distribute more relief than absolutely necessary. It seems to have been regarded more as a nuisance than anything else. According to the agents, the economic climate of St. John' improved as winter set in. Wages were low, but work was to be had, unlike Paisley.⁴ At least one of the elders in St. John's, William Collins, however, thought that the material condition of the weavers in particular was little improved.⁵ The problem was perhaps

1. C.P., CHA 4.64.24, 18 May 1826, J. Wilson to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.63.3, 5, 7 and 8, 23 February, 27 March, 7 April and 13 June 1826, J. Thomson to T. Chalmers; G.B.R., 15 and 23 May 1826.

2. C.P., CHA 4.62.18, 28 June 1826, J. Somerville to T. Chalmers.

3. Ibid.

4. C.P., CHA 4.13.10, 20 October 1826, J. Thomson to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.55.1, 13 December 1826; CHA 4.83.5, 5 February 1827, H. Paul to T. Chalmers. However, the Glasgow town council was still concerned enough about the numbers unemployed to continue providing work building roads, and considered their situation to be "still an object of first importance", G.B.R., 30 January 1827.

5. C.P., CHA 4.70.1, 10 March 1827, W. Collins to T. Chalmers.

not as simple as the agents quoted above would have liked it to have been.

The effects of this general economic distress were felt in the poor relief structure of St. John's, and not solely in the decline in seat-letting in the chapel. One of the deacons, Robert Kettle, wrote to Chalmers in October 1827, and said that even in the western half of the parish it was proving difficult to make ends meet:

The Deacons Purse is not very weighty and having the Teachers Salaries to pay out of it in our gloomy moments we are apt to anticipate our Bankruptcy but every thing else is thriving finely.¹

Henry Paul revealed to Chalmers at the same time that the surplus of £130 in 1826 and the parish funds generally were being eroded, even though the church collections (as opposed to the chapel ones) were rising. The cause of this erosion was increased expenditure, but Paul did not specify that it was on poor relief. The kirk session considered that the best way to combat this was to create a separate fund for paying the teachers' salaries, which, as Kettle had pointed out, were a severe drain on its resources. Paul, perhaps afraid at having alarmed Chalmers, hastened to add at the end of his letter:

We have no fears ultimately as to our funds in St. John's being quite sufficient, but this year has been rather severe owing to the state of trade.²

This statement in itself suggested that the parish had been forced to spend more on poor relief during the economic crisis. The kirk session records reveal that the separation of the educational and poor relief funds duly went ahead. From 1828 onwards all parochial education in St. John's was to be financed out of the proceeds of two

1. C.P., CHA 4.77.36, 26 October 1827, R. Kettle to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.83.13, 2 November 1827, H. Paul to T. Chalmers.

S.R.O. CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 30 October 1826, 7 May, 6 August, 3 September, 1 October 1827; this pressure on the funds was partly the result of increased numbers of foundling and deserted children.

half-yearly collections in the church and chapel, which arrangement would leave the regular Sunday collections solely for poor relief.¹

The next indication that the poor relief scheme was having some difficulties came in June 1829. At that time Collins wrote to Chalmers that even the ordinary Sunday collections were falling "So much and so as to be much short of our expenditure for the poor".² According to Collins, the session's solution to this was to ask him to draw up a memorial to be circulated amongst the sitters of the church. This was to explain the fact that St. John's parish supported its own poor and was thus totally dependent on the congregation's contributions. It was considered that such an explanation was necessary because, as the years went by and new hearers attended the church, it was feared they might be unaware of the precise arrangements for relief in the parish.³

In addition to these general financial troubles, at least one of the deacons was having doubts by this stage as to the feasibility of the entire St. John's poor relief system. This was Walter Wood, who it will be remembered was a cousin of Chalmers and a Dissenter, but had worked with Chalmers as a Sabbath School teacher and had supported him since 1814. In November 1829 he wrote to his kinsman expressing his feelings and doubts:

Although I am certainly much less sanguine than I was as to the benefit to be derived from the attempt to support the Poor by voluntary contribution, and not fully satisfied as to the practicability, or even propriety of the endeavour to wind off assessments, still I shall not discourage the system in St. John's.⁴

1. S.R.O., CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 10 December 1827; there was also a drive to recruit more deacons to deal with the poor relief claims - 10 more were ordained on 11 March 1828.

2. C.P., CHA 4.119.13, 15 June 1829, W. Collins to T. Chalmers.

3. Ibid.

4. C.P., CHA 4.130.32, 10 November 1829, W. Wood to T. Chalmers.

In September of 1831, Wood reported to Chalmers that he had "ceased to take an interest in the management" of St. John's.¹ Yet he obviously continued to take an interest in its individual parishioners - in February 1832 he died of typhus, which he had caught while visiting his district in St. John's.² His loyalty to his parochial charges was obviously very strong, even if he had come to have some reservations about the system he had so enthusiastically helped to initiate.

Part of Wood's dissatisfaction with the operation of the poor relief system may have been connected with Collins' pessimism over the state of the parochial funds. The latter precipitated a financial statement of accounts being compiled, at the instigation of the kirk session, for the parish as a whole for the previous four years. Fortunately, a copy of this statement was sent to Chalmers by Matthew Montgomerie and has survived in the Chalmers' papers. A summary of this statement is given on page 219. In both his letter to Chalmers accompanying this report, and in his written comments on it, Montgomerie stated his overall optimism. He claimed that it showed that "the 'proper pauperism'" of the parish had decreased despite a growing population, and that:

... the weight we are sustaining arises from immorality exemplified in the burden of exposed and deserted children, and in the sore calamity of lunacy.³

However, if one looks at the figures, it is apparent that the expenditure on "proper pauperism" had only decreased for the most

1. C.P., CHA 4.171.40, 9 September 1831, W. Wood to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.192.68, 10 February 1832, William Wood (nephew of above) to T. Chalmers, intimating the death of his uncle on 9 February 1832.

3. C.P., CHA 4.125.34, 21 October 1829, M. Montgomerie to T. Chalmers; CHA 5.2.99, Table of Revenue and Expenditure of St. John's Church and Chapel for the four years ending September 1826, 1827, 1828 and 1829.

recent year, 1828-9. The two years of the trade depression, 1826-7, and the following year, when Collins had said the weavers in particular were hard hit, had resulted in a great increase of expenditure on "proper pauperism": £264 16s. 3d. and £281 12s. 10d. respectively, as opposed to £203 6s. 8½d. and £195 4s. 9d. for 1825-6 and 1828-9. These totals did not include the "immoral" categories of foundlings and deserted children, nor the "safe" publicly funded lunatics although those also increased dramatically in the last year, 1828-9 to £158. 16s. 3d. as opposed to £50 6s. 3d. for 1827-8, over and above that spent on the regular and casual poor.

As regards the total expenditure of the kirk session on poor relief - on regular and occasional paupers, orphans, deserted and foundling children, Town Hospital paupers, lunatics, coffins and funerals and incidental expenses - the session was running at a loss for every year except the first one 1825-6. As a result of this, the £130 surplus of 1826 was now totally used up, and overall the parish was in debt, although Montgomerie did not insert the exact figure of that debt in his footnotes in the table, but left it blank. Yet Montgomerie was optimistic in both his letter to Chalmers and in this committee report. As has been said, in both accounts he maintained that "proper pauperism" was still declining in the parish, and that all that was necessary to meet even the increased "immoral" pauperism of foundling and deserted children and the rise in the cases of lunacy, which according to Chalmers and his disciples ought to be provided for out of public funds in public institutions, was an increase in the offerings of the church and chapel congregations by thirty shillings a week. At that moment the total given by both was £6 10s. Montgomerie was suggesting that should rise to £7 and £1 respectively.

It will be remembered that in 1819 the total amount necessary to

Table 3: St. John's Income and Expenditure on Pauperism, 1825-9

YEAR	TOTAL SPENT ON PAUPERS ⁴	FOUNDINGS ORPHANS DESERTED LUNATICS	TOWN HOSPITAL PAUPERS	COFFINS AND FUNERALS	INCIDENTALS	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	TOTAL INCOME	BALANCE
	f. s. d.	f. s. d.	f. s. d.	f. s. d.	f. s. d.	f. s. d.	f. s. d.	f. s. d.
1825-6								
CHURCH ³	121 14 10	17 2 3	43 2 0	9 9 0	58 10 5	249 18 6	260 8 3½	+ 10 9 9½
CHAPEL	81 11 10½			6 2 6	23 14 10	111 9 2½	134 18 10½	+ 23 9 8
TOTAL	203 6 8½	17 2 3	43 2 0	15 11 6	82 5 3	395 7 8½	361 7 2½	+ 33 19 5½
1826-7								
CHURCH	132 4 6	60 13 2	39 9 10	15 12 0	26 16 0	274 15 6	291 9 10½	+ 16 14 4¼
CHAPEL	132 11 9			7 0 6	20 18 0	160 10 3	80 19 8½	- 79 10 6½
TOTAL	264 16 3	60 13 2	39 9 10	22 12 6	47 14 0	435 5 9	372 9 7¼	- 62 16 2¼
1827-8								
CHURCH	148 19 0	50 6 3	22 19 6	5 9 0	32 19 0	260 12 9	292 19 8½	+ 32 6 11½
CHAPEL	132 13 10			4 19 6	21 8 0	159 1 4	68 9 0	- 90 12 4
TOTAL	281 12 10	50 6 3	22 19 6	10 8 6	54 7 0	419 14 1	361 8 8½	- 58 5 4½
1828-9								
CHURCH	134 2 3	104 3 9	15 3 0	16 13 0	27 10 4	297 12 4	304 5 10	+ 6 13 6
CHAPEL	61 2 6	54 12 6		4 19 0	23 7 6	144 1 6	63 17 9	- 80 3 9
TOTAL	195 4 9	158 16 3	15 3 0	21 12 0	50 17 10	441 13 10	368 3 7	- 73 10 3

1. Taken from C.P., CHA 5.2.99, 'State of the Revenue and Expenditure of St. John's Church and Chapel for the years ending September 1826, 1827, 1828 and 1829'.

2. The financial year ran from September to September.

3. 'Church' designated the western area of the parish served by St. John's Church.

4. For the Church, this included permanent and occasional paupers. The accounts for the chapel were kept differently by the eastern deacons, and included foundlings, orphans, deserted children and lunatics, except for 1828-9, when the children were listed separately.

relieve the 125 old sessional poor alone had been £225. By 1823 this had fallen to £152 to support the 57 old sessional poor remaining on the roll. The 20 new paupers admitted since 1819 only cost £66 a year - a total of £218. (Although 7 of these, costing £34 were the products of immorality and lunacy). If the number of Town's Hospital poor was also added - 34 at a cost of £90 - then the total for 1823 was £308.¹ This sum, Chalmers had claimed, would necessarily fall with each year as some of those old session and Hospital pensioners died, and because of the rigorous diminution of the rate that new paupers would be allowed on the session roll by the deacons. Yet there is evidence that seven years later the totals spent on all categories of paupers were £365 and £355 for the two years from September 1826 to September 1828. Even excluding the two categories of immoral and lunatic paupers, as Chalmers advocated, and the extra Town's Hospital poor, the totals for 1826 to 1828 were £264 and £281, as opposed to £184 in 1823. Hardly the massive and obvious decrease Chalmers had predicted and indeed claimed had in fact taken place. In drawing his overall conclusions, Montgomerie seems to have been interested only in the most recent figures, for September 1828-9 of £195, which indeed was much smaller than the 1823 figure. Yet to ignore such annual fluctuations as had obviously taken place, was to ignore the kernel of the industrial problem.

What was perhaps most significant in this table was its revelation of the sums contributed in the chapel collections. Although relatively healthy in the first year, 1825-6, a total of £134, this fell markedly in the initial year of the trade depression, 1826-7, to £81, and by 1828-9 was £63. It would seem that Somerville's optimism concerning the return to the chapel of the inhabitants of the chapel district once better times resumed had not

1. See above, p. 149.

been fulfilled. St. John's parish was experiencing the apparently irreversible loss of the masses to regular church worship that later writers were to speculate on at great lengths.¹

In the context of this thesis, the most significant aspect of this fall in the chapel income is in relation to Chalmers' claim that even a smaller parish with an average annual collection of £80 a year could easily meet all its poor relief needs under his system of management. If the chapel collection figures are set against its annual expenditure on regular and occasional poor relief then the financial viability of Chalmers' claim already seems highly dubious. Once again, it is apparent from these figures that, apart from the first year, the chapel district was in grave financial trouble and its self-sufficiency in poor relief matters was very shaky.

In 1830, Chalmers was called to give evidence before a Committee of the House of Commons on the Irish Poor Law.² In April of that year he wrote to a number of the St. John's elders and deacons and asked for up-to-date information on the progress of the parish experiment which he could use when examined as a witness by the Parliamentary Committee. He later published his answers to the latter in the third volume of his Christian and Civic Economy. The statistics Chalmers used in these answers were taken directly from letters that have survived from members of the St. John's session.³ They are summarised as follows:

1. For example, see H. MacLeod, Class and Religion in the Victorian City (London, 1974).

2. See below, pp. 379-381.

3. Mainly from the following: C.P., CHA 4.136.5, 15 April 1830, W. Collins to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.150.41, 15 April 1830, J. Wilson to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.143.22, 23 April 1830, J. McVey to T. Chalmers.

1819-29: 36 paupers left the parish, 54 entered; a positive balance of 18

September 1828-9: £384 spent on poor relief; but if subtract the £34 spent on lunatics, and £117 on orphans and deserted children, then £232 had been spent on general indigence.¹

Chalmers repeated his earlier arguments against lunatics, orphans and deserted childred being provided for by the kirk session.²

The other statistics for St. John's that Chalmers provided in this printed account were:

1819: 164 paupers₃ (117 sessional and 49 Hospital)

1829: 99 paupers₃

The figure for 1829 he was given by William Collins in a letter in answer to Chalmers' enquiries. Collins broke the 99 paupers down further: that is, 68 regular sessional poor, 29 exposed, orphaned and deserted children, and 2 lunatics in the asylum but provided for by

1. T. Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 3, C.W., vol. 16 pp. 338-40.

2. Ibid., pp. 375-7; see above, p. 137. As late as 1847 Chalmers was still asserting that poor orphans and foundlings were better provided for when left to the spontaneous benevolence of relatives and friends. Indeed, in 1847 he was instrumental in changing the consitution of Donaldson's Hospital to emphasise the education of deaf and dumb children (or, he also suggested, blind children) as opposed to the intention of the founder to provide a Hospital for poor boys and girls: C.P., CHA 4.329.15, 17, 19 and 28 January 1847, J. Irving to T. Chalmers.

3. T. Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 3, C.W., vol. 16, p. 343.

the parish. Over and above these, there were only 4 Hospital poor. Yet it will be remembered that in 1823 Chalmers had stated that by then there were only 77 regular paupers in the parish, including orphans and the like - 57 old sessional poor and 20 new ones taken on since the start of the experiment. Somehow, 22 more paupers had been added to that 1823 total, indicating that by 1829 the number of paupers taken on under the new regime was not only in the majority - since the number of old poor could only decrease through death and removal - but was also rising. No doubt, Chalmers could explain away this extra 22 by referring to the overall influx of 18 paupers from other parishes. Indeed Collins told him in this letter that 18 such paupers would cost £108 a year.¹ Yet, this argument was something of a red herring. Over and above the impracticability of a law of residence for the Glasgow parishes that Chalmers was agitating for more forcefully in 1830 than he had done in 1819, such immigrant poor could easily have been removed from the St. John's roll by a purge similar to that of 1824, a few months after their entry into the parish. The 'extra' 22 paupers of 1829 must have been in particularly great need to have been allowed on the roll by the strict St. John's deacons. So much for Chalmers' continued claim that the incidence of pauperism in St. John's could only decrease, and indeed would at some future point be almost extinct as the parish community was led back into the natural methods of coping with the needs of their neighbours personally as opposed to letting them become dependent upon the public at large.² It would seem from all this that at least after the first

1. C.P., CHA 4.136.5, 15 April 1830, W. Collins to T. Chalmers.

2. See above, pp. 91, 93-4, 136.

ten years such a community had not yet been brought into existence in St. John's.

There are some interesting insights into St. John's parochial life in these April 1830 letters, which again did not come across in Chalmers' evidence before the Parliamentary Commission. For example, this period marked the beginning of William Collins' interest in the problem of drink in Glasgow and the cause of temperance. He gave Chalmers his reasons for this concern:

... for within these four years since whisky became cheap drunkenness has increased to a fearful extent. You have no conception of it now. It is really destroying all that is good among us. The profanation of the Sabbath on this account is indeed fearful. We cannot shut their shops on Sabbath, and yet spirit dealers in our own Parish tell us that if we shut their shops on Sabbath they may give up business altogether, as Sabbath is the most productive day they have. Is this not appalling, and does it not demand our outmost exertions to arrest the progress of this distinctive evil.¹

Once more, such information casts doubts on the overall moral and spiritual impact of the St. John's experiment on the parishioners. Yet the St. John's session was certainly not inactive in trying to do something about this problem. For example, earlier in April 1830 the session had petitioned the magistrates and town council not to renew the licence of spirit dealers profaning the sabbath by selling spirits on that day in St. John's. A year later it refused to baptise the child of one such dealer, Mr. Hamilton, apparently in an effort to do something themselves to solve this growing problem.²

It was precisely because of this lack of a moral and spiritual

1. C.P., CHA 4.136.3, 12 April 1830, W. Collins to T. Chalmers. In the later 1830's, Collins was still bemoaning the fact that in St. John's "'honest poverty'" could be coped with, "'but we do not know what to do with immorality and drunkenness'", : W. Logan, The Moral Statistics of Glasgow (Glasgow, 1849) p. 26; D. Keir, The House of Collins (London, 1952), p. 96.

2. S.R.O., CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 5 April 1830 and 4 April 1831.

impact on its population that the minister Thomas Brown wrote in his reply of 1830 to Chalmers' request for information that the poor relief experiment might indeed fail. It is obvious from this letter that Brown still wholeheartedly supported Chalmers' poor relief scheme:

... were it generally put into operation it would prove most beneficial to the community at large, it would have a powerfully moral effect both upon the Receiver and the relieved - We shall always have the poor with us, and none will deny that the really necessitous ought to awaken our sympathy and have their wants relieved but the system of assessment has a powerful tendency to create Pauperism by extinguishing the spirit of Independence and unnerving the arm of Industry.¹

However, he also endorsed Chalmers' original outline for the parochial system - that is, the provision of the Christian and moral sides of the experiment had to keep pace with the extent of the population in the cities. In St. John's in particular, more churches were needed, and a greater breakdown of its population into smaller geographical units:

... but when the pauperism of so many thousands is to be supported ... chiefly from the proceeds of one church door I must confess I am not without my anxieties sometimes - I trust however we shall be enabled to keep our ground. I have most zealous active coadjutors who still feel the impulses you gave the, Our Collections have considerably improved and been kept up during the winter.²

Yet, in Chalmers' printed 1830 evidence he did not labour strongly on this point of the necessity for more churches and a greater moral apparatus that had figured so prominently in his earlier writings about Glasgow before he had begun in St. John's. True, he talked of the necessity for widespread education in Ireland, but there was no hint in his 1830 description of the progress of St. John's that its current minister considered that the poor relief experiment was being jeopardised by the sheer size of the city parish and would only

1. C.P., CHA 4.133.12, 17 April 1830, T. Brown to T. Chalmers.

2. Ibid.

be an unqualified success if the moral and Christian provision were extended accordingly. Perhaps, for Chalmers, any qualification of the success of the experiment to date smacked of an admission of potential failure in the future.

The only other letter that has survived from among those that were written in 1830 in reply to Chalmers' requests for information, was from one of the original deacons, Campbell Naismith. The latter wrote a glowing account of his proportion. He had only ever had three regular paupers (two old men who had been ill and soon died, and a woman deserted by her husband and left with four young children). His only current case was a foundling child - and even that case had originated in another part of the parish but was being looked after by an inhabitant of his district, who was therefore eligible for a pension from the session to bring up the child.¹ Such evidence serves as a reminder that, even if the total number of paupers and the expenditure on their relief was rising, at least one deacon in St. John's managed an area very 'successfully', on Chalmers' terms.

In summary, as the 1830's opened, the St. John's poor relief experiment was still very much in existence, and appears to have maintained the support, with one known exception, of most of its original protagonists. It had encountered its first set of serious financial difficulties, however, and had tackled these initially in 1828 by ceasing to fund its educational apparatus out of the weekly collections. From then on, the latter were devoted solely to poor relief and its related expenditure, such as funeral expenses for the

1. C.P., CHA 4.145.12, 17 April 1830, C. Naismith to T. Chalmers.

poor. This in itself was a blow to the long-term optimism of Chalmers' initial expectations that the income of the purified parish would more than meet its poor relief needs, leaving an ample surplus for the educational requirements of the parish. Indeed, Chalmers was later to change his mind about the necessity for education being funded at the parish level, and later advocated a state endowed system of parochial education.¹ After all, St. John's was a large parish and the educational demands on it were correspondingly great. The more threatening diminution of its funds arose as a result of greater demands on them due to an industrial depression. Hence, the 1829 table of accounts drawn up to show the kirk session their exact financial situation. This revealed that the surplus of parish revenue in existence since Chalmers' incumbency in the parish and a product of the large congregations and collections he had attracted, had been swallowed up, and by 1829 the parish was actually running into debt.

As trade improved in Glasgow in 1830-2², the few letters that have survived which were written to Chalmers by the St. John's agents, all indicated that the parish had weathered this particular financial storm.³ Indeed, the next crisis in the parish was one that again afflicted the whole of the city, and the rest of the country - this time in the form of typhus and cholera epidemics. The most prominent of the St. John's people to be actually struck down was one of the elders and their treasurer since 1819, John Wilson, who died in August 1832. Unfortunately, it is not known how many of the actual

1. T. Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 1, C.W., vol. 14, p. 155, footnote.

2. N.S.A., vol. 6, p. 130 - 170.

3. Namely, C.P., CHA 4.126.29, 13 November 1830, J. Playfair to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.188.6, 10 November 1832, H. Paul to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.186.25, 14 February 1832, M. Montgomerie to T. Chalmers.

parishioners were afflicted, although there is no reason to doubt that they suffered a similar fate to the rest of Glasgow.¹ The reaction of those agents who kept in touch with Chalmers seems to have been primarily to assert the necessity to reaffirm their faith and atone for the nation's sins.² David Stow reiterated the necessity for such a reformation of character, when he wrote that drunkenness, antenuptual fornication and not paying house rents were affecting almost half the population. His solution was a network of infant schools where spiritual and moral training would predominate. In other words, the parochial schools should incorporate a training similar to that offered by the Sunday schools.³

No letters survive that consider any economic effects of the epidemic, nor how many families had been left without their main breadwinners and how they coped. Yet the session's records reveal that there was indeed an increased burden on its funds at this time due to:

... the numerous cases of pauperism occasioned by the present severe epidemic and of children whose parents had been cut off by the disease, ...⁴

Indeed, the Town's Hospital records reveal that the St. John's deacons actually applied to it for £11. 5s. 4d. spent "in extraordinary aid to persons and families labouring under Typhus Fever." Pressure yet again from their influential supporter on the council, Robert Dalglish who had in fact just completed two terms in office as Glasgow's Lord Provost, resulted in the Hospital directors granting their request.⁵

1. J. Cleland, The Rise and Progress of the City of Glasgow (Glasgow, 1840), p. 13: between February and November 1832, just over 3,000 died from cholera in Glasgow, which Cleland estimated at one death per approximately every thirteen families. If this ratio is applied to St. John's, then it is estimated that 166 died out of its population of over 10,000.

2. C.P., CHA 4.191.38, 24 August 1832, J. Thomson to Chalmers; 4.183.3, 19 September 1832, H. Paul to T. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 4.191.7, 3 November 1832, D. Stow to T. Chalmers.

4. S.R.O., CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 3 September 1832.

5. G.T.H.M., 20 November 1832.

The individual whose reaction to the cholera epidemic most disappointed the above writers was in fact the minister's, Thomas Brown, who apparently "fled to the Country for weeks".¹ The effect of this abandonment of his flock in their time of need was compounded by the knowledge that he was considering leaving the parish to take up the charge of Ratho. Henry Paul wrote to Chalmers that he did not know what would become of St. John's:

... but after all that we have done for Dr. Brown I must say that his conduct surprises me not a little, and must give to many not connected with us, an utter dislike to struggle much longer on behalf of our system.²

Over the next few months a successor to Brown was looked for, and as had become usual, Chalmers' advice was sought.³ However, the agency as a whole was keen to encourage Brown to stay:

The Elders and Deacons with equal truth are declared that while the sphere of ministerial usefulness in this Parish is great and increasing the agency continues willing to co-operate in every plan which can be reasonably expected to do good - And believing as the Elders and Deacons do, that the Magistrates of this city as Patrons, are ready to bestow their countenance on all such plans, they hope that Dr. Brown may ... remain minister of St. John's Church and Parish, trusting that under the divine blessing his services will be for the good of souls, and the Defence and maintainance of the Walls of our beloved Zion.⁴

Such entreaties, plus the fact that the call to Ratho was only subscribed by twelve individuals, induced Brown to stay. A very relieved Matthew Montgomerie relayed this to Chalmers:

I think there is now a fair chance of firmly maintaining the system in St. John's parish.⁵

It is obvious from both these statements that the agency was still committed to the programme in St. John's, but were genuinely worried about its survival if the minister was changed yet again. In

1. C.P., CHA 4.188.4, 1 October 1832, H. Paul to T. Chalmers.

2. Ibid.

3. C.P., CHA 4.204.28, 25 January 1833, P. Falconer to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.216.26, 21 March 1833, J. Thomson to T. Chalmers.

4. C.P., CHA 4.210.37, 26 March 1833, M. Montgomerie to T. Chalmers.

5. Ibid.

addition, it is also apparent from this that the experiment continued to be regarded by the St. John's agency as very much a spiritual one and not just one in poor relief. This makes it even more striking that in his public writings in the early 1830's Chalmers was not giving similar emphasis to that. He was still intent on proving his economic and philosophical theories, even although it was he who had initially presented those theories in a Christian context. He did not ignore the latter, but his proofs were in isolation - he never showed whether the St John's parish population was in fact more moral and Christian, but simply stated that must be the case since its poor relief expenditure was so low.¹

As in previous periods, little evidence survives for these years up to 1833 of the treatment of individual poor relief cases. Ironically, what has survived, in the Chalmers' correspondence, is again a number of cases where Chalmers was personally involved in sending relief to former parishioners, or soliciting the services of the elders and deacons to gain more information on the moral worth and precise predicament of individuals from St. John's or Glasgow who had petitioned him directly. Fifteen such cases are documented to varying degrees: three widows, four women (one of whom was a former teacher in the St. John's parish school at Annfield), and eight men (one of each of the following: a bankrupt, carpet weaver, unemployed cotton operative, impoverished student, poor teacher, unemployed machine

1. T. Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 3, C.W., vol. 16, p. 322.

maker, destitute man, and a Glasgow Town Hospital pensioner).¹

Interestingly, in no case that survives did Chalmers ask any of the deacons for their opinions or for their mediation. Rather, in five cases four elders were involved, and two of his female workers in two other cases.²

In the case of the small bankrupt businessman, Chalmers was advised not to give anything to help him pay his debts of over £400, since Dr. Rainy had heard that the man "got into habits of intoxication", and therefore Rainy doubted whether anything Chalmers gave would be "of any service in disencumbering him".³

In the case of the former Annfield school teacher, the elder James Thomson hastened to assure Chalmers that he and the deacon concerned, John Nelson, would be able to raise the money to help her out themselves - Thomson having already paid off her debts of £16 - and so Chalmers himself did

not need to give her any money.⁴

1. C.P., CHA 4.56.45, 11 October 1827, J. Thomson; CHA 4.75.39, 19 January 1827, D. Hamilton; CHA 4.84.21, 1 February 1827, H. Rainy; CHA 4.66.23, 26 July 1827, J. Bartley; CHA 4.68.1 and 3, 15 September and 2 October 1827, D. Calderhead; CHA 4.69.47, 21 October 1827, J. Chalmers; CHA 4.123.51 and 52, 18 May and 3 November 1829 and CHA 4.142.1, 12 February 1830, and CHA 4.183.51, 31 May 1832, W. Liddal; CHA 4.138.1, 1830, and CHA 4.204.10, 7 September 1833, Widow Edmonston; CHA 4.165.8, 11 February 1831, G. Morrison to; CHA 4.159.68, 26 May 1831, A. Gray; CHA 4.201.5 and 6, 11 June 1833, J. Campbell; CHA 4.210.30, 1833, Mrs. E. Milleson; CHA 4.283.52, 29 April 1839, Margaret Lawson; CHA 4.179.41, 2 May 1832, R. Findlay; CHA 4.180.20, 13 April 1832, and 4.180.24, 26, and 28, 18 April, 30 April, and 19 September 1832, Elizabeth Giles; CHA 4.79.53, 26 February 1827, and CHA 4.124.54, 2 June 1829, Mrs. MacKinnlay; CHA 4.74.8, 27 March 1827, Sophia Gilfillan; all to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.63.12 and 4.86.45, 19 December 1826 and 11 October 1827, J. Thomson (elder): CHA 4.75.39, 19 January 1827, D. Hamilton, and CHA 4.84.21, 1 February 1827, H. Rainy (elder); W. Collins (elder) was mentioned in CHA 4.183.51, 31 May 1832, W. Liddal; CHA 4.138.1, 1830, Widow Edmonston referred to James Wilson (Elder): Ann Hutcheson (female worker) was mentioned in CHA 4.210.30, 1833, Mrs. E. Holleson; and CHA 4.74.8, 27 March 1827, Sophia Gilfillan (female worker); all to T. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 4.84.21, 1 February 1827, Dr. Rainy to T. Chalmers.

4. C.P., CHA 4.86.45, 11 October 1827, J. Thomson to T. Chalmers.

Of the remaining cases, two stand out. One concerned the continued saga of Widow McInlay.¹ By 1827 she had moved out of St. John's to St. Enoch's parish. She wrote to tell Chalmers that the Minister of St. Enoch's, the former St. John's minister Dr. McFarlan, had found some work for her winding yarn, but this was not enough to redeem the belongings her last landlord had taken in lieu of rent.² Chalmers must have written to Sophia Gilfillan, who had already been involved in this case, and asked her to find out more. Miss Gilfillan replied to say that she herself had found the widow work, but did not think that her case was as urgent "as that of many a poor family in the present depressed state of trade".³ This gives some idea of how badly off some of the parishioners were during the trade depression of the later twenties, since it was part of the widow's bedclothing that the landlord had confiscated. Miss Gilfillan added that as far as she knew the widow was "a respectable character and I am inclined to think well of her".⁴ An interesting footnote to this case is a letter from a "Mrs. MacKinnley" to Chalmers two and a half years later, written from the Glasgow jail due to "a small scrap" she had fallen into. The letter was to ask Chalmers to write to a "fiscall", Mr. Simson, to look after her children.⁵ If this was the same woman, her fate is tragic. Even when what little official help available in St. John's was proffered to the morally upright, misfortune and a struggle to make ends meet in bringing her

1. See above, pp. 172-3, 203.

2. C.P., CHA 4.79.53, 26 February 1827, Mrs. Mckinlay to T. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 4.74.8, 27 March 1827, S. Gilfillan to T. Chalmers.

4. Ibid.

5. C.P., CHA 4.124.54, 2 June 1827, Mrs. McKinlay to T. Chalmers.

children up alone, followed her for a number of years. If indeed she did end up in jail, her fate was still one of misery and uncertainty despite the 'support' of the parish agents.

The other case worth detailing was that of a David Calderhead. He did not know Chalmers personally but was a member of the St. John's congregation during Chalmers' four years there. He apparently had been a bright pupil at school - although his parents were poor, two relatives had paid for his books and fees at the Grammar School. However, this funding had suddenly ceased, and although he was offered free tuition in one class, he declined it. After that, he worked in a counting house and later in a cotton factory, trying to study at the same time. The two letters that Calderhead wrote containing the above details overflowed with principles of self-help, the work ethic, and the necessity to pay for education even if very poor.¹ They serve as a sharp reminder that a section of the poorer classes must have accepted and believed the principles that Chalmers and some of his fellow ministers preached and indeed practised.²

These are virtually the only surviving references to individual relief cases in this period in St. John's. The session records contain references to foundling children, but only to outline their increasing numbers and the necessity for providing ample moral supervision over them.³ The only specific case in the records was to remove a foundling child from its carer who had been found drunk.⁴

1. C.P., CHA 4.68.1 and 3, 15 September and 2 October 1827, D. Calderhead to T. Chalmers.

2. Only two known instances have emerged where Chalmers himself gave money to public institutions. Both were schools and so in keeping with his stated principles: C.P., CHA 4.166.49, 27 December 1831, Elizabeth Patterson to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.215.33, 28 December 1833, Eliza Stone to T. Chalmers.

3. S.R.O., CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 30 October 1826, 7 May, 6 August, 3 September and 1 October 1827.

4. Ibid., 1 July 1833.

It is frustrating that the Deacon's Court records have not survived for this nor for any period during the duration of the experiment.

The surviving evidence for the spiritual state of St. John's during Brown's time is also sparse. From various letters and the kirk session records, it is apparent that an effort was made in 1827-8 to extend the contact of the elders with the congregation, as opposed to the parishioners. Before, under Chalmers' immediate guidance and principles the minister and elders concentrated on the parishioners: visiting, conducting small services for local areas and generally trying to reach the mass of the St. John's inhabitants who did not attend church. In that sense, the 1827-8 measure was regressive. The church congregation, like the parish as a whole, was divided into proportions, and each elder was assigned six to ten pews over whose sitters they had superintendence for the issue of sacrament tokens and testimonials.¹ It would seem that the sheer practicalities of the situation had made it impossible for the elders to continue indefinitely to ignore the existence and needs of the congregation.

It would be wrong to suggest, however, that the agency had abandoned its concern with the evangelization of the lower classes of the parish. One of the main anxieties displayed in the session records was over attempts by the magistrates to raise the seat rents of the church. It has already been seen that such an attempt was made in September 1825.² In May 1829, the magistrates and council once more tried to raise the seat rents, and the St. John's session was particularly concerned with the rise in parts of the galleries

1. Ibid., 29 October 1827 and 5 March 1828; C.P., CHA 4.100.22, 23 February 1828, J. Thomson to T. Chalmers.

2. See above, pp. 210-211.

"usually occupied by the lower classes".¹ In their memorial to the council on this issue, the St. John's session argued that :

... the parish of St. John's is principally inhabited by persons in the middling and lower ranks of Society; and it has been the earnest wish of the Kirk Session ever since the erection of the parish and the opening of the Church, to induce the habit of church going among the parishioners, and to have the congregation as much as possible a parochial one.²

They went on to say that as a result of compliance by the council with their 1825 appeal on this issue, nearly all the seats in the gallery were let "and a very great proportion of them occupied by parishioners".³

On this occasion, however, the town council refused to comply , arguing that already the St. John's seat rents were considerably lower than those of the other city churches.⁴ It was obvious from the memorial that the session was also worried by the fact that if the church attendance fell off at all, then its collections, and therefore its income for poor relief disbursements, would fall drastically. It will be remembered that 1829 had been its worst financial year so far. This must have been exacerbated by the continuing decline in the church attendance. The approximately 954 families in St. John's with no seats in any church by 1825 had risen to 995 by 1831 out of a total of 2,583 families and a population of 11,746. Two years later, this increased yet again to 1,203 families with no seats. At the time it was asserted that this was a direct result of the cholera and typhus outbreaks and the trade depression, the temporary inability of many families to afford any seats rents turning into a permanent

1. S.R.O., St. CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 4 May 1829.

2. Ibid., 7 September 1829.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid; but the town council also agreed to revise this the next year, and to bear in mind the advantages of reducing some of the seat rents in all the city churches, for the benefit of the middle and lower classes, G.B.R., 2 July 1829.

"abandonment" of religion, as was happening in the other Glasgow parishes. It was not till 1833 that St. John's church was able to reduce the price of some of their seats by one-third, and managed to let 200 more of them.¹

As regards the pastoral superintendence of the parish, there were still 27 proportions in 1833, with 24 elders and 23 deacons, although 5 of the former were also deacons, making 42 in all as opposed to the full potential of 54. 2652, or 22.58% of the population held seats, representing 1,380 of the 2,583 families in the parish. Unfortunately, it is not apparent in which churches these seats were located, but overall this represented a fall of over 5.5% in church seats let since 1825, although more families shared these seats than was estimated for that year. Perhaps the elders were having some impact on the poorer families of the parish, who may have been able to rent one seat per family as opposed to the average 2.22 of 1819. However, as with poor relief, it has been shown that the onset of fever outbreaks or trade depressions was able to revert the process, and left both parishioners and the agency further apart from each other.²

The remainder of the session records was mainly taken up with cases of discipline for "irregular" marriages and antenuptial fornication. There were also some references to petitions to the magistrates and council, and indeed to parliament, concerning the profanation of the Sabbath by the preparations on Sundays for the Monday cattle market in the parish, the rehearsal of music by soldiers at the nearby barracks during the morning service, as well as

1. Glasgow Church Building Society, Statistics of the Church Accommodation of Glasgow, Barony and Gorbals (Glasgow, 1836), p. 13; G. Lewis, The Eldership of the Church of Scotland (Glasgow, 1834), p. 34.

2. See above, pp. 210, 214; G. Lewis, Ibid., p. 34.

the sale of spirits by various public houses, already mentioned.¹

The other main indication of the spiritual condition of the parish was the efforts by members of the Glasgow City Mission in St. John's, and later links with the Church Extension Committee of the Church of Scotland.² Some of those connected with the former were agents in St. John's - for example, Peter Gilfillan, Patrick Falconer (a Director of it from the start), William Collins, and David Stow.³ Once more, the obviously genuine evangelical concerns of some of the St. John's agents coincided with those of their initial leader, as Chalmers became more involved in the church extension schemes of the 1830's, and indeed became convenor of the first Church Extension Committee in 1834. It was in the mid-1830's that Chalmers was stating the necessity for city churches with no more than 2,000 of a population,

1. S.R.O., CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 5 September 1825; 5 June, 3 July and 7 August 1826, 5 April 1830, 31 March 1834, and 1 February 1836.

2. N.S.A., Glasgow, vol. 6, p. 193: the Glasgow City Mission was formed on 1 January 1826, to promote the spiritual welfare of the poor of Glasgow and its neighbourhood. They employed mainly divinity students (twenty-two by December 1831), to visit people in their houses and discuss religion with them. The Glasgow Church Building Society of the 1830's was spearheaded by William Collins, and reflected both the concern in Glasgow on this subject, and the increased work of the Church of Scotland Extension Committee.

3. C.P., CHA 4.220.11, 12, 14, 16, and 18, 27 February, 27 March, 19 May, and 16 June 1834, 4.220.18, 24 October 1834, 4.248.8, 12, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 31, and 33, 6 April, 26 May, 28 July, 1 and 26 September, 8 and 28 October, 5, 26 and 28 November, 1836, W. Collins to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.299.13, 11 June 1834, 4.191.5, 19 September 1832, 4.215.40, 19 November 1833, D. Stow to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.73.28, 5 September 1827, 4.204.32, 34, 1 and 14 March 1833, P. Falconer to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.74.4, 6, and 7, 21 August, 27 September 1827, P. Gilfillan to T. Chalmers. There is also evidence that the St. John's congregation itself subscribed over £1,500 for the church extension project: CHA 4.248.31, 26 November 1836, W. Collins to T. Chalmers; and CHA 4.246.63, 6 December 1836, W. Buchanan to T. Chalmers.

and in this too he had the support of his former Glasgow co-workers.¹

By September 1833, St. John's had four parish missionaries.² One of these, Mr. Cameron, wrote to the session in June 1835, and this letter gives some insight into the condition of one part of the parish. He wanted to open a Sabbath preaching station in the Sidney Street area, where he believed few went to any church. Already he had tried to hold evening meetings during the week, but on the whole these had not been well attended:

... 'as a great number of people are weavers, or some way connected with them, so that both males and females are obliged to work late in the evening.'³

There is no doubting the continued concern on the part of some of the middle class congregation and agency with the spiritual provision for the inhabitants of St. John's, but it is also obvious that not a great deal of progress appears to have been made in persuading the latter to attend church if nothing else. The amount of time and effort expounded in this concern, as evidenced by the letters of the four agents involved in the City Mission and cited above, was immense. As with Chalmers, this, rather than the specific social and poor relief problems of the cities, appeared to assume greater priority as the 1830's progressed. Although neither Chalmers nor his followers ever abandoned their belief in Chalmers' poor relief solution, the sheer scale of the more obviously spiritual problem of church provision and evangelism of the city masses seemed to be overtaking them.

Chalmers' personal relationship with many of the St. John's agents was a close one. His role as spiritual adviser and comforter

1. C.P., CHA 4.229.13, 11 June 1834, D. Stow to T. Chalmers. See below, p. 333.

2. S.R.O., CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 5 August and 3 September 1833.

3. Ibid., 1 June 1835.

continued long after 1823 with a few of them. Again, instances where he wrote or attended the funeral on the death of former agents' wives, fathers or children, and kept in touch over the spiritual fate of individual parishioners he had visited while in St. John's, reveal a sensitivity in him that is missing from his poor relief scheme. Indeed, some of his Glasgow acquaintances were always to remain in touch with him, and, united in a common Christian commitment, followed him into the Free Church.¹

An assessment of the impact of the St. John's experiment would not be complete without an examination of two important aspects: the work of the chapel built in 1822 largely at Chalmers' instigation, and the structure of education, both parochial and sabbath, that evolved as the years progressed. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to these topics.

The background and funding of the St. John's chapel have already been discussed in chapter four.² The chapel minute book opened with a copy of its constitution as drawn up by the General Assembly on the 24 May 1822. This constitution was important in several respects. First of all, it established that its poor relief system would be integrated with that of its parent parish, St. John's, funded out of its own collections, as opposed to being necessarily

1. For example, N.L.S., MS. 5406/24, 9 March 1824, Eliza Whigtman; C.P., CHA 4.37.44, 8 January 1824, Catherine Paul; CHA 4.37.3, 5, 6, 19 March, 18 October and 31 December 1824, and 4.48.1, 23 December 1825, Ann Naismith; St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.356, 357, 21 January and 13 May 1825, P. Gilfillan; CHA 4.49.58, 16 April 1825, J. Sommerville; CHA 4.45.22, 16 November 1825, Mrs. John Kirkland; CHA 4.64.9, 22 July 1826, J. Westwater; CHA 4.82.8, 16 February 1827, R. Neilson; CHA 4.76.11, 14 May 1827, G. Heggie; CHA 4.89.17, 8 April 1828, T. Brown; CHA 4.210.43, and 45, 2 and 5 December 1833, M. Montgomerie; CHA 4.204.27, 6 December 1833, Cosmo Flaconer; CHA 4.227.16, 14 January 1834, H. Paul. All these letters were addressed to T. Chalmers.

2. See below, pp. 184-6.

connected with the centralised Glasgow Town's Hospital.¹ Its managers, eleven in all, had each subscribed at least £100, and held one vote per £100 share in the administration of the chapel affairs and in the election of its ministers. The minister's stipend, of at least £150 a year, was to be paid out of the seat rents, but the managers were personally liable for it if those rents proved insufficient. It is obvious from the wording, however, that it was presumed that the seat rents would be more than enough for the stipend, since it was also stated that any excess of the £150 would first of all go to the beadle and precentor's salaries, then to pay interest of 4% on the patron's subscriptions, and lastly might be used to increase the stipend or begin to pay back the patrons.²

The geographical area the chapel served was in the eastern half of St. John's parish (See map, page 130). Unfortunately, it is difficult to estimate the population of the chapel area, but it was probably around 4,000 in 1823, and was definitely 4,555 by 1825, with the western half of the parish serving 5,676 inhabitants.³ The

1. S.R.O., CH2/176.5, Minute Book, St. John's Chapel, 1822-1840, 24 May 1822, article 7 of the Constitution of the Chapel.

2. Ibid., articles 3, 5 and 6 of the Constitution.

3. After St. James had been created in 1820, removing six of the original proportions numbered 20 to 25 from St. John's, the remaining 19 proportions were redistributed to make up 25 once more. These were redefined yet again as the years progressed, so that by 1825 there were 27 in all. Therefore, although there is evidence that in 1822 proportions 9 to 19 made up the chapel district, it is uncertain where exactly those were. In 1819 the original 9 to 19 proportions incorporated a population of 4,845, which would have left the western part of the parish with a much smaller population of only 3,449 once St. James and the chapel had been removed. This seems unlikely. More probably, the chapel was carved out of the original 1819 proportions of 10 to 13 (a population of 1,364), or 8 to 14 (a population of 3,121), each of which would have made an obvious partition of east and west in the parish - see map, p. 130. By 1825, the remaining western proportions had been redistributed to form districts 1 to 8 and 20 to 27: C.P., CHA 5.1.29, Abstract of the Survey of St. John's parish, 1825.

eastern inhabitants had first claim to the seats in the chapel. Next in line were the St. John's parishioners generally, and lastly the public at large. The chapel itself had enough seats for a congregation of 1,430 individuals.¹

Chalmers, as a manager with five shares, was actively involved in the affairs of the chapel throughout the 1820's and 1830's. The first major decision concerned the appointment of a minister. Chalmers had a personal interest in this election. The new minister would relieve him of the care of a considerable number of parishioners. That, plus the disjunction of St. James in 1820 would effectively mean he and his successors would have had spiritual charge of approximately 4,500 in 1822, as opposed to the 10,000 he had begun with in 1819. He approached several young men about the vacancy and finally settled on Joseph Somerville (1789-1844), a member of a Secession church family from Kelso. Somerville had left the Secession and studied to be a Church of Scotland minister. In 1822 he was assistant at Yetholm, and was elected to the chapel on 17 June 1823.² He was to remain as an assistant in the latter until his death in 1844, having moved with it to the Free Church in 1843. As regards his initial appointment, it is obvious from the surviving records that Chalmers' voice was the one listened to by the rest of the managers, and that in this issue at

1. C.P., CHA 4.210.43, 2 December 1833, M. Montgomerie to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.26.45, 18 February 1823, J. Henderson to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.29.48, 1 January 1823, A. Stuart to T. Chalmers; S.R.O., CH2/176.5, Minute Book, St. John's Chapel, 17 June 1823.

least he had had complete freedom of choice.¹

Before settling on Somerville as the chapel minister, Chalmers sent off several letters of enquiry about him to friends he could trust. In those letters Chalmers' preoccupation was with such considerations as whether Somerville was a good preacher and would appeal to the lower classes, and also whether he had any "unmangeable peculiarities" of temper "or do you think that he would be pliant and take advice?"² In other words, Chalmers wanted someone who would materially lighten the load of his own and his successor's work, but would not prove too self-assertive and so interfere with the smooth running of his parochial machine. Chalmers was later to claim that part of the chapel's failure, and therefore its detrimental influence on the parish as a whole, was Somerville's personal responsibility,³ but Chalmers himself, as the prime mover and advocate for Somerville, was not free from all responsibility for the outcome.

There is little surviving evidence for the management of the chapel district's poor relief. The deacons for the proportions of this eastern part of St. John's met separately as the Eastern Deacons' Court,⁴ but like their western counterparts, their records have unfortunately not survived. They also had their own treasurer who

1. For example, Joseph Somerville knew from Chalmers before the actual election that he would be elected - C.P., CHA 4.29.39, 18 June 1823, J. Somerville to T. Chalmers; also in a letter from James Campbell, one of the managers, to Chalmers concerning a later dispute between some of the managers and Chalmers over who should be the chapel beadle and the precentor, Campbell stated that Chalmers had always said that if he were allowed the minister, he, Chalmers, wanted then the managers could fill the other offices as they pleased - C.P., CHA 4.24.43, 11 September 1823.

2. C.P., CHA 5.2.75, 25 May 1823, Mary G. Lundie to T. Chalmers; N.L.S., MS. 51676/191, 2 June 1823, T. Chalmers to the Rev. Lundie (Kelso).

3. T. Chalmers, The Sufficiency of a Parochial System, without a Poor Rate, for the Right Management of the Poor, C.W., vol. 21 (hereafter Sufficiency of a Parochial System) Appendix 5, p. 126.

4. C.P., CHA 4.36.26, 17 January 1824, J. McVey to T. Chalmers.

disbursed among them the collections for their distribution amongst the poor.¹ The only specific description of the condition of the people living in the chapel area was written by the minister, Somerville. Seven months after his appointment, and two months after Chalmers had left Glasgow, Somerville wrote of his impression after visiting his area. He was moved by the good reception he had received on those parochial visits, but also obviously shocked by the physical state of many of the buildings and of the people themselves:

... in such a poor and rather profligate Parish as St. John's the visitant of the families in it, will encounter much that is offensive to the bodily senses; he will in some places see dismal exhibitions of filth and squalid wretchedness; and much in the moral sensibility and utter deadness of the people to their eternal interests, that is enough to make the heart of every Christian Minister bleed and his eyes to overflow with tears at such appalling spectacles.²

Apart from the 1825 and 1828 statements detailed above, the only other mention of anything related to the management of the poor relief in the chapel area in the period before 1836, was in a letter written in 1827 from Matthew Montgomerie to Chalmers. By that time, the chapel funds were so low, Montgomerie suggested using part of the collections to pay for the minister's stipend since the seat rents alone nowhere near met the latter.³ There is no reference to this ever even being suggested in the chapel minutes, which is hardly surprising. Chalmers was unlikely to agree since he had fought so hard at the beginning to ensure those collections were kept intact for his poor relief experiment. With votes himself, and a moral authority

1. S.R.A., CH2/176.8, St. John's KSR, Secular affairs, 1819-25, 7 July 1823, p. 42.

2. C.P., CHA 4.39.1, 28 January 1824, J. Somerville to T. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 4.267.12, 22 March 1827, M. Montgomerie to T. Chalmers.

over many of the other patrons,¹ it seems logical that this suggestion by Montgomerie would be still-born.

Just as it was necessary, in considering the outcome of the poor relief experiment on St. John's as a whole, to look at any evidence of the spiritual and moral condition of the inhabitants, so it is vital to examine the spiritual and moral impact of the scheme on the chapel district within St. John's. It will be seen in the next chapter that in later years Chalmers stated that one of the factors that militated against the overall success of St. John's was its size.² He advocated a repeat of his experiment in smaller parishes, of no more than 2,000. Yet with the formation of the chapel the St. John's system had already been tried in a more sub-divided parish than Chalmers ever really acknowledged. Although Chalmers and his fellow managers of the chapel were very optimistic at the beginning of the chapel's history, the expected spiritual and material results were very slow in coming. Provided with a similar structure of deacons, elders and sabbath school teachers, it ideally should have been the St. John's experiment in microcosm, its beneficial effects being magnified in proportion to its comparatively smaller size. It has already been seen, however, that in the realm of seat-letting and church collections it had ever-increasing difficulties in supporting its minister and its poor. The reasons for this were not immediately apparent to those who worked so hard to make it a success, and proved a continual source of anxiety and frustration.

The chapel opened for worship on 29 June 1823. When Chalmers

1. See above, p. 185: one St. John's deacon and five elders were among the eleven patrons, as well as Chalmers' Glasgow friends C.S.Parker and James Dennistoun, and James Douglas of Cavers.

2. See below, p. 269.

left in November his friends in St. John's kept him well posted on its development. Those letters, plus the chapel minutes and its later kirk session records provide evidence for the activities in it in this period. From the start, it is apparent from the Chalmers correspondence that the work in the eastern area of the parish was not going to be easy. Somerville himself, despite his initial optimism, rapidly realised that his task was an uphill one, surrounded as he was by "a sluggish mass" of spiritual immaturity.¹ In his letter quoted above describing the poor material and spiritual state of many in his district, he went on to describe:

... the hundreds nay thousands of them still living without God and without hope in the world ... The reformation of even a few nay one single family of this description, would be so great a moral achievement, that it far transcends in importance the very utmost energies which human activity and eloquence have to expend and time itself to supply.²

By February 1824, Chalmers' friends were already writing to him in anticipation of his visit to the parish in June, during the university vacation, and added that they hoped that visit and Chalmers' preaching during it would stir up "the languid state of the chapel district".³ The reason for this languid state did not appear to lie in Somerville's ability as a preacher. Some highly critical St. John's workers testified to his sound delivery of evangelical principles.⁴ He also methodically visited the chapel

1. C.P., CHA 4.25.53, 29 November 1833, M. Montgomerie to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.39.1, 28 January 1824, J. Somerville to T. Chalmers.

3. St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.58, 9 February 1824, A. Buchanan to T. Chalmers.

4. For example, C.P., CHA 4.25.53, 29 November 1823, M. Montgomerie to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.27.40, 23 December 1823, J. W. McVey to T. Chalmers; St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.58, 9 February 1824, A. Buchanan to T. Chalmers; C.P., CHA 4.37.3, 19 March 1824, Ann Naismith to T. Chalmers.

district and so could not be faulted as neglecting that part of his duties.¹ By April 1824 he was apparently exhausted by his initial onslaught on the parish, and had to retreat to Port Bannatyne near Rothesay to the summer house of one of the chapel patrons, in order that he might recuperate.² Although Somerville himself made light of this to Chalmers, and tried to be optimistic in his reports to him, he struck others, who were meeting him constantly, as being depressed.³

When McFarlan was appointed minister to St. John's in July 1824, he made it clear to Somerville that the latter had the full pastoral care of the chapel area, including presiding over the Deacons' meetings, and would meet with little interference from McFarlan. Not every one was so accommodating, however. It appears that reports about Somerville reached Chalmers during his visit to Glasgow in the summer of 1824, which made Chalmers write to chastise him and which had left Chalmers "'sadly grieved and disappointed'".⁴ Unfortunately, only Somerville's replies to these letters from Chalmers have survived, and it is unclear from those what exactly Somerville had been accused of. Perhaps it was his retreat to Port Bannatyne and his growing reputation for already being discouraged by the chapel work. Certainly, in his letters justifying himself, he was

1. C.P., CHA 4.39.1, 28 January 1824, J. Somerville to T. Chalmers; St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.99, 15 April 1824, A. Buchanan to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.39.3, 14 April 1824, J. Somerville to T. Chalmers; St. A.U.L., MS. 30385.58, 9 February 1824, A. Buchanan to T. Chalmers; C.P., CHA 4.38.54, 28 April 1824, John Smyth (Glasgow minister) to T. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 4.36.10, 16 August 1824, P. McFarlan to T. Chalmers.

4. C.P., CHA 4.39.7, 16 August 1824, J. Somerville to T. Chalmers.

at great pains to point to all the work he had accomplished in the chapel as proof of not having neglected his duties.¹ No matter the precise cause, what is pertinent here is the fact that this marked the beginning of a cooling in the relationship of the two men - a fact which could not have helped the life of the already ailing chapel.

By November 1824, and with McFarlan's encouragement, Somerville had recovered some of his enthusiasm for the scheme:

... as every fresh instance affords me additional pleasure, and convinces me of the efficacy of this Christian experiment in reclaiming the careless and dissolute to church-going habits.²

At the end of 1824, John Wilson - an elder, and St. John's treasurer - reported that the chapel was in debt, but only for the sum of £43 4s., which he considered good for the first year. Matthew Montgomerie echoed this optimism, but added:

... although the Chapel undertaking has not come up to our expectations, it may still do so, while for only a moiety of the good that was anticipated it was worth embarking all that has been embarked both of money and labour.³

Somerville's second full year as chapel minister once more began on a note of optimism as more seats in the chapel began to be let.⁴ By the end of 1825 even Chalmers seemed satisfied by the progress that had begun to be made.⁵ However, when the trade depression of 1826 began to take its toll, it was particularly bad in this poorer section of St. John's. As has already been pointed out, its effect on the

1. Ibid.,; also, CHA 4.39.9, 9 September 1824, J. Somerville to T. Chalmers. Somerville was a candidate for Stirling parish at this time, but was unsuccessful: CHA 4.37.48, 17 September 1824, H. Paul to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.36.13, 6 September 1824, P. McFarlan to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.39.11, 15 November 1824, J. Somerville to T. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 5.2.93, 22 January 1825, M. Montgomerie to T. Chalmers.

4. C.P., CHA 4.50.8, 19 March 1825, J. Thomson to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.48.42, 29 April 1825, H. Paul to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.48.44, 7 July 1825, H. Paul to T. Chalmers: Paul reported that over 800 seats had been let and that Somerville was improving every day.

5. C.P., CHA 4.49.56, 6 December 1825, J. Somerville to T. Chalmers.

letting of chapel seats was disastrous, and it was obvious that there would be an even greater struggle ahead to regain those lost.¹

After 1826, Somerville's correspondence with Chalmers dried up, or at least the incidence of its survival. It may have been, however, that as the chapel sank into greater difficulties, Somerville stopped reporting back the depressing details to Chalmers. The decline in the seat rents was a great personal financial blow for the patrons, including Chalmers. It will be remembered that they were liable for any deficit between the income from the seat rents and the minister's stipend. By March 1827, some of the patrons considered that they should petition the Glasgow presbytery and the General Assembly to ask if they might use part of the ordinary sabbath collections to make up this deficit.² This was never carried out, but the suggestion is indicative of the extent of their concern.

Over the next two years the situation worsened as regards the decline in sitters and so also of the income it had been initially hoped would provide not only the stipend but also repay part of the patrons' debt.³ In May 1829 the patrons, including Chalmers, met together to consider the debt of £161 5s. 8d. that was due to their treasurer Henry Paul, and that of £330 3s. 3d. due to the Glasgow Bank. They also considered "the very remarkable falling off in the seat letting at this time", despite the fact that the congregation was still large - that is, people were just not registering nor paying for

1. See above, p. 214; C.P., CHA 4.62.16 and 18, 18 April and 28 June 1826, J. Somerville to T. Chalmers: CHA 4.60.32, 29 April 1826, H. Paul to T. Chalmers: Paul recorded that so far only 300 seats had been paid for, and the chapel could seat 1,600.

2. C.P., CHA 4.267.12, 22 March 1827, M. Montgomerie to T. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 4.83.5, 5 February 1827, H. Paul to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.89.18, 1828, T. Brown to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.127.1, 12 May 1829, H. Paul to T. Chalmers.

their seats.¹ As a means of meeting these problems, they decided to ask Mr. Somerville to announce in the chapel that the seats should be properly let, and also to ask Chalmers to preach a sermon in the summer to revive interest generally in the chapel concern. It was also agreed that extra collections should be taken quarterly for the chapel funds - in other words, as opposed to trying to siphon off any of the ordinary collections. The natural person to preach on such extra occasions, and also the one who would probably draw in the highest collections, was Chalmers himself. This he agreed to do.

Despite all these measures, the surviving correspondence from the chapel elder, patron and treasurer, Henry Paul, and Chalmers during 1830-1 remained full of references to the poor financial condition of the chapel.² Likewise, the chapel minute book for 1830 recorded an increased debt of £269 14s. 2½d. to Paul, and £330 3s. 4d. to the Glasgow Bank - a total of nearly £600.³ Before doing anything further about this, the patrons decided to await the full impact of the measures they had agreed to seven months before. However, by 18 October 1832 the debts had risen to £331 3s. 4d. plus interest to the bank, and £454 6s. 9d. to the treasurer, a total of over £800. The main reason for this debt was still ascribed to the low level of seat rents "notwithstanding of various and very particular means taken to stimulate the seat letting." It was agreed to try and borrow money to pay off this debt, and the beadle's and precentor's salaries were reduced from £15 to £10 a year.⁴

By September 1833 the total debt had again risen, to £900, but

1. S.R.O., CH2/176.5, St. John's Chapel Minutes, 22 May 1829.

2. C.P., CHA 4.146.4, 20 December 1830, and 4.166.50, 51 and 54, 6 and 13 October and 10 December 1831, H. Paul to T. Chalmers.

3. S.R.O., CH2/176.5, St. John's Chapel Minutes, 27 December 1830.

4. Ibid., 18 October 1832.

290 more seats had been let, at a reduced rent, bringing the total sittings to 620, still a small proportion. Nothing had been done about borrowing money, but the patrons did decide to approach the Glasgow town council and magistrates to take over the chapel and make it into a parish.¹ Nothing had been done concerning this by the next patrons' meeting in September 1834, when it was decided to liquidate the debt by assessing the individual shareholders £50 per share - a sum that was increased to £65 a share by January 1835. It was recorded in the minutes that Chalmers was in favour of such an assessment, although it meant him personally having to pay £325. He even persuaded the other patrons to exclude the largest shareholder, Douglas of Cavers, from paying any of this assessment. Once more, Chalmers' voice comes across as the dominant one among the chapel patrons.

These rather drastic measures of the patrons having to add even more money to what had apparently been a very poor investment, did at least remove the two debts mentioned.² The ascribed reason for the lack of money was the decline in seat-rents, a trend which is confirmed in the minute book:

<u>Year</u>	1825	1826	1827	1828	1829	1830	1831	1832
<u>Income</u> <u>from seat</u> <u>rents</u>	£121	£197	£63	£108	£47	£152	£130	£83

This decline was taken as indicative of a parallel decrease in Somerville's ability to pull in the inhabitants of the chapel

1. Ibid., 9 September 1833.

2. Ibid., 30 September 1834 and 12 January 1835. As a result, Paul's debt was cleared by 6 July 1830, although Somerville was still owed £225 in stipend: and CH2/176.5, 6 July 1836; and the Glasgow Bank's debt was cleared by 5 February 1836: C.P., CHA 4.254.11, 5 February 1836, M. Montgomerie to T. Chalmers.

district. Tantalisingly little evidence as to Somerville's personal part in this has survived. It is definite, however, that by 1836 he himself was convinced by his ill-health and for "the temporal and spiritual propriety of the parish" that he should surrender a part of his stipend to support the appointment of an assistant and successor to take over his pastoral duties.¹

Mr. William Hunter (1802-1882), a missionary at Lanark, was duly appointed an assistant and successor in St. Thomas' on 14 September 1836, and was ordained on 17 November.² His salary was to be £80 a year, which left Somerville with £70. Montgomerie wrote to Chalmers, stating that they all hoped a new assistant would produce "a rapid increase in the congregation".³ In fact, the chapel continued to run into debt, and by 1840 the patrons were obviously bewildered by this, despite the "great exertions" of the new assistant.⁴ Chalmers at least was spared the personal burden of yet another assessment of £20 per share. The previous year, five of his Glasgow friends had arranged that his five shares be divided among them: William Buchanan, William Campbell, William Brown, Matthew Montgomerie, and Mr. Parker.⁵ Thus the personal loyalty of Chalmers' Glasgow colleagues and friends was still apparent sixteen years after he had left the city. For some people at least he was a charismatic leader.

1. S.R.O., CH2/176.5, St. John's Chapel Minutes, 6 July 1836; C.P., CHA 4.254.17, 12 July 1836, M. Montgomerie to T. Chalmers.

2. S.R.O., CH2/176.5, St. John's Chapel Minutes, 11 September 1836.

3. C.P., CHA 4.254.17, 12 July 1836, M. Montgomerie to T. Chalmers.

4. S.R.O., CH2/176.5, St. John's Chapel Minutes, 22 January 1840: £103 was owed to Somerville, £40 to Hunter, and £50 to the new treasurer, Mr Buchanan.

5. C.P., CHA 4.285.11, and 5.2.110, 14 October and 31 October 1839, M. Montgomerie to T. Chalmers.

The other main development in the chapel's history was its becoming a parish under the General Assembly's chapels act of 1834. It was given a new name - St. Thomas - and parochial boundaries which encompassed a reduced population of approximately 2,900 - 650 families. (See map, p. 130.)¹ The main change in its organisational structure was the addition of its personal kirk session. Although it had had its own Deacons Court, it was the St. John's kirk session who had disciplined the chapel inhabitants. The new kirk session records opened on 26 January 1835, and mostly referred to cases of discipline similar to those of its 'mother' church, St. John's - that is, fornication and illegitimate births.² The only reference to poor relief in its records came in July 1835 when it met with the St. John's kirk session:

... for devising such measures as might be necessary for the future management₃ of the poor in consequence of the disjunction of the parishes.

The outcome of this meeting was the St. Thomas' kirk session agreeing "to make a trial of supporting the whole poor within the bounds of the parish". However, when the St. John's session gave up the poor relief experiment the next year, St. Thomas' followed suit.

The story of the chapel is an interesting one from many angles. As an attempt to evangelise the inhabitants of the eastern district of St. John's it appears to have been an unequivocal failure. Whether

1. For the background to this act see H. Watt, Thomas Chalmers and the Disruption (Edinburgh, 1943), pp. 138-40; these boundaries were redrawn yet again to include the two Annfield parochial schools, increasing the population of St. Thomas' by another 100: S.R.O., CH2/635.1, St. Thomas' KSR, 3 September 1834, 6 September 1836, CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 6 June and 5 September 1836.

2. S.R.O., CH2/635.1, St. Thomas' KSR, 1834-1843.

3. Ibid., 1 July 1835.

its minister, Joseph Somerville, was to blame for this is debatable - especially when it is considered that the later assistant seemed to make as little an impact on the population as he had done. Yet the chapel also demonstrated the great loyalty of some Glasgow businessmen to Chalmers and to the evangelical cause. Chalmers himself comes across in this story as being a persuasive leader, even when absent from Glasgow, and the whole affair demonstrates his ability to encourage individuals to invest money in the cause of religion, and to continue to do so, even when that cause seemed to be making little positive headway. As regards the poor relief of the chapel area, there appears to be no reason to accept Chalmers' idea that its general low state of funds detracted from the ability of the experiment to survive. The poor relief funds for the chapel were not tampered with to help pay off its general debt, and there is no evidence to suggest that its deacons were any more lenient than their western counterparts. The development of the chapel seems rather to demonstrate and epitomise the great problems involved in making any impact - moral or Christian - on an industrial area with the sources of personnel and finance available at that time.

One of the aims of this thesis has been to highlight Chalmers' dual conception of parochial life and organisation in its ideal form: the moral/secular side and the spiritual/Christian side. The two were meant to complement and reinforce one another. The organisational structure of St. John's reflects this ideal. Just as the deacons and their poor relief work freed and reinforced the elders in their pastoral care, so the provision of parochial education was supposed to be complemented by that of the sabbath schools. This link was perhaps even more apparent in the nineteenth century world of educational thought, which assumed the ideal of propagating the word of God and Christian faith through secular learning. It was obvious that a

network of sabbath schools might take up where the schools left off, and use the basic reading and writing skills for the same aim of spreading Christian teaching. Certainly, if Chalmers' Scriptural References for sabbath teachers was followed, the children would have been encouraged to relieve their fellow Christians in the parish.¹ It is debatable how much of this was put into practice on reaching adulthood - the history of the experiment to date suggests it was limited by such external factors as the state of trade.

As was pointed out in chapter four, the St. John's Sabbath School Society was a development of the Tron Society which had begun while Chalmers was minister in the Tron parish.² It split into two after the creation of St. John's chapel, and, like the deacons, formed itself into an eastern and western society for those respective areas in the parish. Each society was self-sufficient financially. The teachers' services were voluntary, but the cost of renting rooms plus heating and lighting them was met by two half-yearly special collections in the church and chapel.³ Both societies were headed by elders who were devoted to Chalmers. The western society by that indefatigable campaigner for the spread of the word of God, William Collins, aided by the educationalist David Stow, and the chapel branch by James Thomson, a deeply spiritual man and a frequent correspondent of Chalmers.

It is interesting that women were once more prominent in this area of the pastoral life of St. John's, and their work was considered of particular worth in the qualities they brought to bear on the

1. T. Chalmers, Scripture References Designed for the use of Sabbath Schools and Private Christians (13th Edition, Glasgow, 1827), p. 22.

2. See below, p. 159.

3. C.P., CHA 4.149.35, 5 April 1830, J. Thomson to T. Chalmers.

sabbath school programme.¹ In 1825 the western society had fourteen male teachers, and seven female: the eastern had thirteen men and five women - a total of 27 men and 12 women teaching 845 of the 1598 children of their parish. That is, 42.79% did not attend, but over 50% did.² The schools appear to have prospered for a while, but, like the rest of the parish, ran into financial problems in 1825, when Collins wrote to inform Chalmers that both societies were in debt.³ The response of the teachers was similar to that of the chapel patrons - that is, to ask Chalmers to come and preach in the expectation of a large congregation and therefore a large collection which would clear the debts of both societies.⁴ Once more it would seem that Chalmers' personal charisma and powers as a preacher were deliberately sought out to help the financial state of yet another aspect of his parochial programme. This certainly casts doubt on his attestations that his scheme did not need a powerful and well-known minister like himself to lead them if they were to succeed.⁵ He was asked yet again to preach, for the chapel school funds alone this time, in 1827.⁶ However the debts must have been eased somewhat by a legacy of £135 in 1835 from a Mr. George Duncan, left specifically for the St. John's sabbath schools.⁷

As regards numbers attending the sabbath schools, figures are

1. C.P., CHA 4.30.23, 1823, Elizabeth Whitelaw to T. Chalmers: N.L.S., MS. 5406/24, 9 March 1824, T. Chalmers to E. Whitelaw: C.P., CHA 4.36.15, 29 November 1824, P. McFarlan to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.63.12, 19 December 1826, J. Thomson to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 5.1.29, Abstract of Survey of St. John's, June 1825.

3. C.P., CHA 4.54.17, 11 April 1826, W. Collins to T. Chalmers.

4. C.P., CHA 4.63.5 and 7, 27 March and 7 April 1826, J. Thomson to T. Chalmers.

5. For example, T. Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 3, C.W., vol. 16, Appendix 2, p. 268.

6. S.R.O., CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 2 April 1827.

7. C.P., CHA 4.149.35, 5 April 1830, 4.216.26, 21 March 1833, J. Thomson to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.211.59, 5 April 1833, H. Paul to T. Chalmers; S.R.O., CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 7 September 1835. Duncan also left money to the other Glasgow parishes for their sabbath schools. For example, S.R.O., CH2/550.6, St. Mungo's KSR, 16 June 1835.

elusive. Certainly, in 1828, Thomson wrote to inform Chalmers that five more schools had opened in the chapel district - three male and two female. This steady growth in the number of schools and teachers continued. By 1833, there were 47 Sabbath school teachers in all (34 men and 13 women), serving 1,180 children.¹

The St. John's Sunday schools were not only aimed at children. Some were devoted to adults. A group of teachers involved in the latter type also went into the neighbouring Calton parish to try and spread the Gospel there. According to David Stow, the Calton was far worse off than St. John's as regards its spiritual state. In St. John's 5/12th. families did not attend church in 1834, whereas in the Calton it was 10/12th.² Although these figures are not verifiable, it does appear from this that the St. John's agency, aided by its network of sabbath schools, was having some impression. The fact that these teachers were willing to branch out and work in the Calton parish is also one more witness to their personal commitment and the depth of their Christian faith.

After the poor relief experiment folded in 1836, the sabbath schools continued in their work. In a letter from George Heggie, a deacon and a sabbath teacher, it would appear that once the poor

1. C.P., CHA 4.216.26, 21 March 1838, J. Thomson to T. Chalmers; G. Lewis, *Ibid.*, p. 34.

2. C.P., CHA 4.229.13, 11 June 1834, D. Stow to T. Chalmers.

relief side of the experiment had been removed, the spiritual side, at least in relation to the sabbath schools, flourished financially as well as in its spiritual impact. Heggie also wrote that the parish church was well filled, and compared the situation to when Chalmers himself had been parish minister.¹ Perhaps it was easier to maintain the pastoral oversight of a parish when its material welfare had been removed from the responsibility of its workers.

It is not the aim of this thesis to do any extensive survey of parochial education in the nineteenth century. Rather, it is necessary to consider the educational provision in St. John's from the viewpoint of how it fitted into and was affected by the overall parochial programme. Among the surviving Chalmers papers is a handwritten list by Chalmers headed "Account of ordinary week day schools". Part of the list has been torn, but it is still useful. It must have been written in 1821/2, and lists thirteen schools in the parish, including the two parochial schools at McFarlane Street. At one of the latter, English was taught by Mr. James Aitken, for a salary of £25 a year. Aitken had eight years teaching experience, and in St. John's he taught 122 day scholars, 33 afternoon ones, and 4 evening (adult) scholars - a total of 159. At the other parochial schools, arithmetic, geography and mathematics were taught by a Mr. John McGregor, for the same salary. McGregor had two years teaching experience and was in charge of 50 day scholars, 35 evening, and 5 "mathematical", a total of 90. The other eleven schools were all private, but some were affiliated to particular religious groups: that is, two Established church, one reformed Presbytery, one Relief Church, one Old Light Burghers, and one Catholic school. Only the

1. C.P., CHA 4.299.10, 23 December 1841, G. Heggie to T. Chalmers.

last was free - all the others charged fees. Apart from the total of 162 children being taught in the first three of these schools, no other totals are given, and so it is difficult to make comparisons.¹

The reference to a Catholic school in St. John's parish was not surprising. Glasgow was attracting a considerable number of Irish immigrants throughout this period, a number of whom were Roman Catholic. From his Kilmany days, Chalmers had favoured the repeal of all civil disabilities from Catholics. He agreed that they only serve to antagonise the latter and to make them unwilling to listen to Protestant doctrine. Chalmers' support of emancipation, which culminated in his famous public speech in Edinburgh on 14 March 1829, has been documented by Hanna and Brown.² Chalmers personally attested to the large numbers of Catholics in St. John's and certainly by 1833 there is evidence of 111 Catholic families, and 741 individual Catholics by 1837. In 1825, the Catholic school in the parish had 320 pupils, taught by two teachers, but had started to charge fees. It was run by the Catholic School Association, and was funded by voluntary contributions, including those given at sermons where eminent preachers, like Chalmers himself, were invited to speak. In his 1830 Irish evidence Chalmers, revealed that he had come to an agreement with the Association that if the Catholic school used the Authorised version of the Bible, then Catholic teachers might teach in it. He added that this system worked well, and that he himself had been invited to be present at one of their examinations. When he moved to Edinburgh, Chalmers maintained his contact with Catholics,

1. C.P., CHA 5.2.34, "Account of ordinary week day schools".

2. Hanna, Memoirs, 1, pp. 198, 311, 329; Brown, Chalmers, pp. 57, 64, 112-5, 183-9.

and was invited to the funeral of the Vicar Apostolic in 1831.¹

As the St. John's experiment matured, three more parochial schools were added to the MacFarlane Street Academy. Two teachers were provided at Annfield Academy, and one each in Chalmers Street Infant School, and Chalmers School of Industry. These parish schools were reserved strictly for St. John's parishioners, and the fees charged at them were kept as low as possible - 2/- a quarter for reading, 3/- for reading and writing, and 4/- for reading, writing and arithmetic. It had already been seen, however, that as the 1820's progressed it became increasingly more difficult to subsidise these parish schools out of an increasingly more illusory 'surplus' from the sabbath collections. By 1827 it was decided to stop even attempting to do this, and rather to provide the teachers' salaries from two collections a year in both the church and the chapel.²

The financial consequences of the educational apparatus in St. John's for the overall parochial experiment will be considered further in chapter six. For the moment, it is necessary to examine the impact of these four parochial schools. Did they indeed reinforce the moral and Christian aims of the St. John's experiment, paving the way for a future generation of peaceful diligent, truly charitable and neighbourly parishioners? Certainly, the St. John's agents considered that to be their aim, and looked at Chalmers:

1. T. Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 3, C.W., vol. 16, pp. 378, 411-3; S.R.O., CH2/171.6, Glasgow Presbytery Records, 6 December 1837, p. 506; SRA, CH2/176.8, St. John's Kirk Session Minutes, secular affairs, 6 June 1825; C.P., CHA 4.39.45, 10 June 1824, H. Tennent to T. Chalmers; 4.46.22, 20 September 1825, A. MacGeorge to T. Chalmers; 4.166.42, 1831, A. Paterson to T. Chalmers.

2. See above, p. 215.

... as the author of schools that will survive when we are all in the cold and silent grave, as Memorials of Talent, of Patriotism, of Humanity and of every Christian and social virtue.¹

From the start, the MacFarlane Street School run by Aitken seems to have been exceptional. Aitken was against corporal punishment, and intended to use "some more rational and milder instrument, for stimulating the inactive, and reforming the mischievous".² His alternative relied on a rewards system - excellence in reading, spelling, attendance or conduct, built up points towards being allowed to borrow books from the class library. Unfortunately, there is no record of whether this was actually implemented and with what success. Certainly the elders and deacons kept in close contact with the parish schools, visiting them and carefully monitoring the teaching of the scriptures in them and the general management of them.³ The parish schools were also formally examined by inspectors appointed by the session four times a year. Indeed, in 1835 one of the parish teachers, a Mr. Walker, was asked to resign by the session after his suspect "moral character" had been brought to its attention.⁴

Apart from Chalmers' limited list referred to at the beginning of this section, few other surveys of the whole parish's educational provision have survived. One that has, was compiled in 1825 and was included in the secular record book of the kirk session, as a return to questions from the General Assembly. There it was recorded that there were thirteen day schools, and nine evening schools also taught by the day teachers. It was estimated that there were approximately 1,278 scholars in the parish of whom 533 (41.70%) attended the parish

1. C.P., CHA 4.59.51, 26 August 1826, M. Montgomerie to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 5.2.31, 16 June 1820, J. Aitken to the Rev. Gentlemen and Patrons of St. John's.

3. S.R.O., CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 5 June 1826.

4. Ibid., 2 February, 14 May and 1 June 1835.

schools, and 320 (25.03%) the Catholic schools in Boarshead Lane. Of the 13 teachers, 7 were Established Church, 3 Secession, 1 Relief, and 2 Roman Catholic. All of the schools charged fees. Thus the four parochial schools served a good proportion of those who attended any school in St. John's parish. If the totals given in the 1825 parish survey were accurate - that is, 1,498 children under sixteen in the parish¹ - then the parochial schools also provided education for over one-third (35.58%) of the entire parish childhood population. Between 1828 and 1833, the numbers attending the parochial schools rose steadily from 545 in 1828-9 to 646 in 1832-3. Indeed by 1833 one observer asserted that only 47 children over six years old were unable to read.²

From the point of view of numbers and the taking up of all available places, three of St. John's parochial schools never appear to have had any problems. They were continuously reported as "prospering" and being well filled.³ However, once more the question is raised of who precisely were being reached in these schools. Chalmers had laid down that only parishioners were eligible for places in them, but one of the teachers told him very proudly that "My classes increase yearly in respectability".⁴ This could mean the educational apparatus in the parish was proving effective in reforming the next generation; or it could be taken as meaning the better off inhabitants of the parish were confident enough in the quality of the schools to entrust their children to them. Unfortunately there is not enough evidence to draw any definitive conclusions. There is

1. C.P., CHA 5.1.29, Abstract of Survey of St. John's, June 1825; SRA, CH2/176.8, St. John's Kirk Session Minutes, Secular Affairs, 6 June 1825.

2. G. Lewis, The Eldership of the Church of Scotland (Glasgow, 1834), pp. 33-4.

3. C.P., CHA 5.2.93, 22 January 1825, M. Mongomerie to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.63.3, 23 February 1826, J. Thomson to T. Chalmers; CHA 4.83.7, 17 March 1827, H. Paul to T. Chalmers.

4. C.P., CHA 4.218.8, 16 August 1834, J. Aitken to T. Chalmers.

evidence, however, that one of the parish schools was finding it difficult to encourage even half their capacity of 200 to be filled, despite the fact that it was situated "in the midst of so dense a population."¹ This was Chalmers Street Infant School. Once more this raises the question of exactly how many parishioners, young and old, were not in fact being reached by the parochial educational set-up, and so missed out on what Chalmers had argued would be the mainstay of their survival and the success of his parochial schemes.

When all is said and done, however, it would seem that on the whole the level of education in the parochial schools was high, and their popularity, apart from the exception above, was great. In 1835 the Glasgow Educational Association was founded. The brainchild of a Glasgow manufacturer and educationalist, David Stow, its aim was to train people to teach. It is significant that once more a St. John's agent was prominent in an organisation that embraced a section of the parish experiment and was active in promoting it on a wider level. The Association decided to choose some existing Glasgow schools and also to build some new model ones for its students to practice and learn in. In its first year it trained 52 students, and 60 by 1836. William Collins was also involved in its work, and both he and Stow were appointed by the Association to inform the St. John's kirk session that the Annfield School taught by John Auld had been chosen as one of its "model juvenile schools".² The reasons given for the choice of Annfield were its high standard of "intellectual training", and also "superior accommodation". The kirk session agreed to this, with the proviso that the pupils did not suffer from too many interruptions.³

1. S.R.O., CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 5 September 1836.

2. Ibid., 6 April 1835.

3. Ibid., 14 April 1835.

The Association certainly made it worth their while to have done so. In May 1835 they appointed, at their own expense, an assistant to Auld, a Mr. Marshall Gould, increased Auld's salary by £15 a year, and provided up to £60 a year for maps and materials for the school.¹

Interestingly, one of the few documents, relating more personally to the teachers in the St. John's schools was a letter from John Auld to Chalmers in January 1837. He was writing about the vacant church at Fairlie near Largs, and wondered if Chalmers considered him qualified for it. From his letter it is apparent that Chalmers had taught Auld as a student at St. Andrews. He witnessed to the impact of that tutorship:

I have followed out in my humble sphere of a Teacher those great principles which I imbibed in your class which best move under the blessing of God that moral machinery which can ameliorate the interest of men. My conscience at this moment does not accuse me of being absent when called from the sick bed or death bed or funeral of one of my Pupils or their relations and though I felt as if I were trenching upon the duty of another I have ever been at the call of the sick and the dying.²

He had even lectured:

... in a country parish groaning by assessment those plans which best lead a Parish back from an assessment to the freewill and charitable offerings of the people...³

Here, therefore, was certainly Chalmers' ideal in action in at least one of the parish teachers: his evangelical concerns reinforced his commitment to education, which in turn led him into the moral and pastoral care of his pupils and extended out to their families, the parish community at large, and neighbouring parishes in encouraging people to care for the sick and the poor. That this was also the aim of the St. John's session's educational policy is borne out by a printed document dated March 1839.⁴ That it had so far failed to

1. Ibid., 14 May 1835.

2. C.P., CHA 4.258.46, 4 January 1837, J. Auld to T. Chalmers.

3. Ibid.

4. C.P., CHA 5.2.108, 1 March 1839, Printed letter addressed to Dr. Rainy.

carry out this ideal aim amongst some sections of the parish is also attested to by this document. Thus it referred to :

... a great and increasing number of children and young people who are so far advanced in age as to be employed in factories, cotton works, and other trades, and of these the number uneducated is found to be very great.¹

This was written 20 years after the St. John's parochial experiment had begun. In the previous year, 1838, they had tried to combat this widespread ignorance by asking one of the parish teachers, Mr. Aitken, to hold an evening class for such young people. Despite promising numbers to begin with it had apparently declined.

In February 1839 the kirk session again stressed to the elders the importance of such a class and the arrangements for it. These included working closely with the sabbath school teachers in order to find out which young people were uneducated in each district. It was acknowledged that the sabbath teachers generally had "better information ... of the state of education among the young in their respective Proportions."² The deacons were also asked to report on any uneducated individuals to the elders. In all cases, parents should be encouraged to pay at least a part of the fee for the evening class, but if unable to, the session said that it should pay. Elders and sabbath teachers were exhorted to visit the families concerned to encourage attendance.

This document reveals that, despite the cessation of the poor relief experiment the St. John's kirk session was still anxious to embrace the entire parish and to promote the emergence of a Christian community. Chalmers' overall aim had remained intact:

... none of the youth in the Parish should be allowed to grow up in ignorance, ... by being thus educated, they may become fit subjects for profitably attending our Sabbath Schools, to receive a Christian education also, and thus be prevented from growing up in irreligion as well as ignorance. By the combined efforts of

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

the respective agencies, much may be done to diminish the ignorance and juvenile depravity which so extensively prevail. This can only be effected by religious instruction, but immediate attention to their common education is indispensable to their being prepared to receive a Christian education which is the greater ulterior end we have in view.¹

The implications for the survival of the poor relief experiment that the funding for this secular education held will be considered in the next chapter alongside a general financial assessment of the parochial affairs. What this section on education has indicated is that the personnel and desire to carry out Chalmers' parochial principles in education were as evident as they had been in the case of the elders and deacons. Whether they had unqualified success is once more debatable. The fact that the Chalmers Street Infant School had problems that were openly admitted to as regards reaching the young around it, and the 1839 printed statements, would once more indicate that many St. John's parishioners were still outside the influence of the parochial educational machinery - as has indeed been the conclusion for the impact of the other sides of the experiment as well. Devotion to duty and a belief in the scheme generally were once more not enough to cover the large city population that St. John's parish covered. It is little wonder that in the 1839 edition of the Christian and Civic Economy Chalmers added a footnote stating that he now believed that without government help, neither Christian nor common education could be provided for.² This fact makes it all the more interesting that he did not reach a similar conclusion on the provision of poor relief. The reasons for this, and the financial result of the poor relief experiment will form the subject of the next chapter.

1. Ibid.

2. T. Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 1, C.W., vol. 14, p. 155, footnote.

CHAPTER SIX: Poor Relief in St. John's and the rest of Glasgow:

" ... the People will cost us." 1

The St. John's poor relief experiment folded in October 1837. After a trial of eighteen years the arrangement whereby it had exclusive control over its collections for the disbursement of relief, and its claim of total support of the poor among its parishioners was finally abandoned. Four years later, in 1841, Chalmers published his final assessment and defence of St. John's in a work entitled On the Sufficiency of the Parochial System, Without a Poor Rate, for the Right Management of the Poor. As the title suggests, he, like many of the St. John's agents, asserted that the experiment had not failed and that its conclusion was not a negation of the principles on which the scheme had been founded. The first part of the chapter will analyse the results of Chalmers' poor relief experiment, and his reaction to its closure.

In his 1841 work Chalmers first of all reaffirmed his earlier writings on poverty and its relief being primarily a moral as opposed to an economic problem, and that the best solution was the four natural fountains of relief.² The reasons he gave for the St. John's experiment having ceased to operate were all external to the system and its principles. Namely, although the parish supported its poor independently of the Town's Hospital or any other centralised relief agency, the Hospital was funded by a compulsory tax on all Glasgow inhabitants with means and substance over £300.³ The St. John's parishioners were never exempted from this tax, despite the fact that

1. G.U.L., MS.1036, 7 April 1841, W. Buchanan to T. Chalmers.

2. See above, pp. 94, 97-8, 136; T. Chalmers, Sufficiency of a Parochial System. C.W., vol. 21, pp. 49-54, 93, 244-245.

3. There was a move in the 1820's and 1830's in Glasgow to change the assessment from a tax on means and substance to a tax on rent. It was thought this would spread the burden. For example, G.B.R., 11 January 1825; 13 December 1833; 4 December 1835.

their parish gained no benefit from it. Secondly, the parish was never protected by a law of residence from the entrance of paupers from other parishes, and so could not exclusively control the exact numbers of poor on its rolls.¹

These two reasons for the cessation of the scheme are interesting in themselves. First of all, Chalmers had always claimed that St. John's was the poorest parish in Glasgow, and initially had not pressed for an exemption from the assessment but had only vaguely alluded to it in 1819. That being the case, few of its parishioners would have benefited from any exemption from the assessment.² If Chalmers had argued that the St. John's congregation should have been exempt from the tax then that might more reasonably have affected the outcome, since the congregation was mainly drawn from the wealthy middle class hearers from outside the actual parish. This argument had in fact been put to Chalmers by the third St. John's minister, Dr. Brown, as far back as 1830 when Chalmers had asked him for information he could use as evidence before the Irish Poor Relief Commissioners.³ Brown said that he feared that any withdrawal of a liability for the assessment on the St. John's inhabitants would actually lessen the collections, their only source for poor relief disbursements:

You will know that the great bulk of our congregation is not drawn from our own parishioners but from every parish in town, and were St. John's parishioners relieved, those of our hearers coming in from other parishes still assessed might feel a grudge in supporting the pauperism of a parish that was relieved. If the whole of our sitters were partial to the system and zealous to support it, and contributed from Christian principle such a result need not be anticipated; but it is well known that the offerings of all are not the offerings of charity, and that there

1. T. Chalmers, Sufficiency of a Parochial System, C.W., vol. 21, pp. 130-1.

2. Although it has already been pointed out that it was in fact debateable that St. John's was the poorest parish in Glasgow, see above, pp. 161-4.

3. See above, p. 221.

are many who have no preference to the one system above the other farther than their own purse is affected.¹

Significantly, Chalmers never referred to nor cited this letter in 1830 nor later in his accumulation of evidence in favour of the system and in defence of its closure.

The second reason put forward by Chalmers in 1840 concerned the number of incoming paupers. He stated that over the eighteen years 29 paupers had left the parish, but 61 had entered. Just how practical it would have been to expect such a law of residence as Chalmers wanted is debateable, and indeed was despaired of by the Town's Hospital in Glasgow even although it also wanted one. Glasgow's large shifting population seemed to preclude any efforts to keep pace with the numerous migrants from the rest of Scotland and from Ireland that flocked to the city in search of work during this period. By 1841 Gibb estimates that between 40 and 60% of the city and suburban population were migrants, with the Tron parish in particular being congested with them.² This was also reflected in the Hospital records which were full of references to plans and committees set up to combat the problem of migrants, especially from Ireland who might later become a burden on the poor relief of the city.³ Once more, however, it must be reiterated that the St. John's sessions could have eliminated such claimants on their funds, by one of its "scrutinies". Throughout this period, the legal position of individual suppliants for relief was very weak and ill-defined in Scotland. In practice, the only court of appeal against a kirk session and heritors' decision

1. C.P., CHA 4.133.12, 17 April 1830, T. Brown to T. Chalmers.

2. A. Gibb, Glasgow. The Making of a City (London, 1983), p. 107.

3. G.T.H.M., 18 September 1838. Edinburgh faced similar problems. Rev. J. Lee of the Canongate estimated that over one half of the 500 poorest tenants moved house each year: I.F. McIver, 'Chalmers as a 'Manager' of the Church, 1831-40', in A.C. Cheyne (ed.), The Practical and the Pious, (Edinburgh, 1985), p.91.

was the Court of Session. Indeed Chalmers agitated to have the law better defined and the sessions' legal immunity strengthened further.¹

Had the Glasgow parishes been smaller, this problem of keeping pace with 'stranger poor' might have been more feasible. Indeed, Chalmers concluded his 1841 statement with a challenge to try the St. John's experiment again under different conditions. This time, it would have to take place in a parish of 2,000, with a parish church capable of seating 1,000; preference to parishioners in seat-letting at low prices or indeed free; cheap educational provision for the young; a law of residence; and the church collections were only to be expected to meet new cases of general indigence, not cases resulting from immoral behaviour such as illegitimate children, nor cases of institutional diseases like lunacy.² This proposal was so radically different from the situation he had willingly and optimistically taken up in St. John's in 1819, one is tempted to feel he had changed the rules of the game. For example, in 1823 Chalmers had written to one of his agents predicting that eventually the chapel in the eastern part of St. John's would be providing enough capital for its own upkeep, and it is obvious from this letter that he thought there would be no problem in providing amply for the poor relief and the educational requirements of the western part of the parish. He had also claimed that the size of the parish was irrelevant to the success of his system.³ It is not simply being wise after the

1. See above, p. 200-1, 206; R.A. Cage, The Scottish Poor Law 1745-1845 (Edinburgh, 1981), pp. 1-18; L.J. Saunders, Scottish Democracy 1815-1842, (Edinburgh, 1950), p. 205.

2. T. Chalmers, Sufficiency of a Parochial System, C.W., vol. 21, p. 266f.

3. G.U.L., MS. 1036, 9 October 1823, T. Chalmers to W. Buchanan; T. Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 1, C.W., vol. 14, p. 268.

event, therefore, to challenge Chalmers' 1841 proposals for a new experiment. He had made great claims for the automatic success of his original scheme since it was based on universal principles of human nature. By 1840 he was still making those claims yet also attaching qualifications and conditions that materially altered the initial ground rules. This fact must lead to a serious questioning of his claims for the success of the experiment and its vindication of the premises it was founded on.

That is not to say that St. John's achieved nothing in the field of poor relief, nor that Chalmers' 1841 proposal did not merit attention. The essence of both schemes was the same: to work in small local areas, basing poor relief policy on the intimate knowledge acquired by individual agents about the poor of their district, and backed up by a moral, Christian and educational framework. However, his official reduction in 1841 of the permissible cases of relief to include only those suffering from what he termed general indigence was in itself an indication that he realised the St. John's system had indeed overreached itself and fallen short of meeting its original aims.

In relation to all this, it is important to note that in private Chalmers himself acknowledged that his two conditions of non-assessment and a law of residence stood no chance of ever being adopted in Glasgow. In a letter in April 1836 to William Buchanan, one of the prominent elders and deacons in St. John's, Chalmers made it clear that the St. John's session should ensure that they make a public statement that they would continue the scheme if the council realised these two conditions. He went on to write in private to Buchanan that it did not matter that such an offer "would be rejected". Rather it was important that:

Your willingness at all events should be publicly and authentically made known. The discontinuance of the system, if such is to be the melancholy conclusion of the process, should be hinged on the right cause for it - the want not of confidence or good will on your part, but the want of right and rightfully earned encouragement on the part of the authorities in Glasgow. If such a correspondence as this do not precede the cessation of your parochial economy, it will be a cruel sacrifice of the most important truth and throwing away all the instruction of a great and beneficial example held out for so many years, and convertible to the most useful results in the question of Pauperism. ¹

Chalmers did not consider this strategy as deliberately misleading, but rather as perfectly justifiable, given what was at stake. He also felt justified by his belief that if the scheme failed it would not be because it could not cope with pauperism, but rather be due to "too extended an application of these means to other purposes, and more especially to the object of education". ² And yet it has already been seen that the ordinary church door collections had ceased to provide funds for education as well as poor relief as far back as 1828. ³ It would seem that Chalmers was out of touch with the exact development of his system in St. John's despite his later dogmatic writings describing the scheme in its final years.

This impression of Chalmers being intent on publicly demonstrating the viability of the experiment despite the threat of its demise is once more apparent in a private letter - this time from Buchanan to Chalmers, in December 1836. Buchanan sent Chalmers several copies of an abstract of the St. John's treasurers' book from 1819-1835, and asked for his comments. Buchanan added:

If I can alter it so as to make it more to what you would like it be so good as to command my services. ⁴

Unfortunately, the abstracts Buchanan referred to have not survived, and so it is impossible to compare them to the final statement of

1. G.U.L., MS. 1036, 19 April 1836, T. Chalmers to W. Buchanan.

2. Ibid.

3. See above, p. 215.

4. C.P., CHA 4.246.63, 6 December 1836, W. Buchanan to T. Chalmers.

accounts that was published after the experiment finally closed the next year. However, Buchanan's offer reveals that he was convinced that the actual lay-out of such a table of accounts could result in its contents being interpreted in different ways. He was also obviously keen that the final interpretation would be made in the experiment's favour. Once more, it would be too strong to say that this showed a willingness to deliberately falsify the facts. Rather, all of this points to the eventual conclusion of the experiment having been presented in the way most favourable to the principles of Chalmers and his followers. If possible, a reinterpretation of such evidence as has survived is even more necessary and vital, given these indications that what the St. John's session and Chalmers allowed to emerge was strictly controlled by them. It will be such a reassessment that will form the subject of the next section of this chapter.

Before moving on to a consideration of the final closure of the experiment, it will be useful to include the financial figures Chalmers gave for it in his 1841 work. There he stated that the totals for the collections and for the expenditure on poor relief alone - including general paupers, orphans, lunatics, foundlings, coffins, soup kitchens and coals for the poor - to have been £7,752 11s. 4½d. and £6,595 18s. 10½d. respectively over the eighteen years. In other words, a balance of £1,156 12s. 6d. In fact, he added, there was an overall deficit in the parochial accounts of £229 8s. 0½d., which he attributed to an "excess" expenditure on religious and educational purposes. Indeed, if lunatics, illegitimate children, orphans and deserted children were excluded then only £5,542 10s. 9d. had in fact been spent on "general indigence", leaving a balance of

£2,671 18s. 5½d.¹ These statistics, he argued, proved conclusively that his poor relief system had in fact worked, even in a large city parish labouring under very unfavourable conditions.

In at least one respect, that of money spent on education, Chalmers definitely glossed over information which it can be proved he had in his possession. In December 1836, Buchanan had written to him in response to a specific request from Chalmers for details of the money spent on foundlings, illegitimates, deserted families, and lunatics. These came to a total of £927 6s. 6½d. for 1819 to December 1835. Chalmers had also asked about sessional funds spent on education. To this Buchanan replied that he and the rest of the session were uncertain since there were no precise accounts. When Buchanan had asked several of the "oldest hands" they replied that it was not more than £20.² That must have been since the 1827 decision to spend all ordinary church collections on poor relief, and to hold two special collections each year for educational purposes. Yet Chalmers never indicated that nearly two thirds of the sum spent on educational provision had been contracted before 1828 and therefore had had nine years to be met. Nor did he reveal that for the last nine years of the experiment the parochial economy proper of the parish had been free of this drain on its resources and therefore those years of the experiment merited particular attention as to their outcome.

It is now time to examine, as far as possible, what exactly happened in St. John's in those closing years of the poor relief programme. It will be remembered that we left the St. John's session

1. T. Chalmers, Sufficiency of a Parochial System, C.W., vol. 21, pp. 134-6.

2. C.P., CHA 4.246.63, 6 December 1836, W. Buchanan to T. Chalmers,.

in chapter five in the year 1832, straining under the increasing burden on its resources as a result of the cholera and typhus epidemics, and actually having to ask the Town's Hospital for some relief - another fact never admitted to by Chalmers.¹ There is only one source for statistics of any sort between the table drawn up in 1829 and cited in the last chapter,² and the final table for 1837. That was a statement of accounts drawn up by the new treasurer John Somerville in 1833. Somerville sent this table to James Cleland who wanted it for a work he published in 1834 on the parochial registers of Scotland, and in which Cleland praised the success of the St. John's system of relief.³ In this work, the population of St. John's was given as 11,746. It had thus grown considerably since both the inauguration of the parish and its disjunction from St. James' in 1820 which had reduced it to just over 8,000. Unfortunately, from 1827-8 onwards Somerville did not include the actual numbers of paupers who received relief, although he did provide the total amount of money spent on such categories as foundlings, orphans and deserted children, and lunatic paupers. Chalmers had obviously convinced the St. John's officials of keeping a precise record of such supposedly dubious objects of relief - hence his later ability to point to the total sums spent on such "inadmissable" categories. Unfortunately Somerville was not so meticulous when it came to distinguishing ordinary and occasional poor, and so it is impossible to make precise comparisons with the table and figures for poor relief given

1. See above, p. 228.

2. See above, pp. 217-20.

3. J. Cleland, Letter to His Grace the Duke of Hamilton and Brandon, respecting the Parochial Registers of Scotland (Glasgow, 1834). (Hereafter Letter to His Grace.)

in earlier chapters.¹

What is immediately apparent from Somerville's statistics is that in the last year of Cleland's table, September 1832 to September 1833, there was a large increase in the number of general sessional poor, from 82 to 92, and in the totals spent on them, from £187 11s. 6d. to £205 7s. 10d. The amount spent on occasional poor rose by £4 10s.; and on foundlings, deserted and orphaned children by £10 5s.; although, that spent on lunatics fell by £9 10s.² As with the 1826-7 trade depression, the typhus and cholera epidemics had obviously taken their toll. Unfortunately, no more specific evidence has survived for the years between 1833 and 1835, apart from the general totals later given in 1836.

In July 1836, the chapel was formed into a separate parish, called St. Thomas' in line with the 1834 General Assembly Act. On 1 July 1835 the minister, elders and deacons of St. John's met with their counterparts in St. Thomas' to discuss the poor relief management of the two parishes. The St. Thomas' session agreed:

... to make a trial of supporting the whole poor within the bounds of the parish and to apply the₃ collections so far as they would go in defraying the expenditure.

The former St. John's deacons for the chapel area agreed to continue their work there until new deacons were appointed for St. Thomas' parish. On the surface, therefore, it seemed that the St. John's poor relief system had not only survived but had won a convert. However, in an entry under the same date it was recorded that the former treasurer of St. John's, John Somerville who had died in February

1. For example, see above, pp. 145-155, 217-223.

2. J. Cleland, Letter to His Grace, p. 40.

3. S.R.O., CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 1 July 1835.

1835, had been owed £280. The St. John's session decided to hold a subscription to liquidate this debt, and to appoint a committee to consider "how far retrenchments could be made in the expenditure".¹ The future looked ominous.

Meanwhile, among the elders in St. John's a worrying number of resignations had been coming in. (Unfortunately, it is not known whether the same was occurring among the deacons). Between March 1832 and February 1836, four elders resigned, one more threatened to do so, and two died.² The reasons given for these actual and threatened resignations were all similar: the demands of business and consequent lack of time for parish affairs, and staying at a distance from the parish. Of the four who resigned, two had been elders since 1819 - Robert Brown and George Ord - and two since 1821 - Alexander McGregor and Robert Woodrow. The threatened resignation in 1836 was from James Playfair, an elder since 1825. Perhaps the initial enthusiasm for the whole St. John's set-up was waning, as it had done in the case of Walter Wood.³ Certainly, three new elders were ordained in 1832 (one of whom, Somerville, died in 1835), and five in 1833. This made up any deficit in the total number of elders, but the new men did not have the investment of many years experience with St. John's and the memory of Chalmers' personal inspiration. Campbell Naismith, a deacon

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., 2 July, 3 September, 5 December 1832; 4 December 1835; 1 February 1836. The elders concerned and the dates of their terms of office were: Robert Brown: 1819-5 December 1832 (resigned); John Wilson: 1819- 3 September 1832 (died); George Ord: 1819- 4 December 1835 (resigned); Alexander McGregor: 1821-1 February 1836 (resigned); Robert Woodrow: 1821-1 February 1836 (resigned); James Playfair: 1825-1 February 1836 (threatened to resign); and John Somerville: 1832-1835 (died).

3. See above, pp. 216-7.

in the parish since 1820, later recorded:

There was a degree of laxity on the part of individuals who came in lately. Some of the newer office-bearers were somewhat ignorant, and could not comprehend the object of the management.¹

On 1 March 1836, the committee set up to look into the St. John's session funds reported back to the session. They stated that the debt was mainly the result of the sums the session had spent since 1822 on relieving its Town's Hospital poor. They recommended that the session apply to the Hospital for the reimbursement of the sum of £461 17s. 10d., and ask to be relieved of the sole remaining case which cost them £6 a year. This was unanimously agreed to. On 23 May 1836 the committee presented an abstract of the treasurer's accounts from 1819 to 1835. This was later printed, and a copy of it exists in the Glasgow City Archives.² From this it is apparent that the debt incurred by the St. John's session by December 1835 was £395 1s. 3³d. It is obvious that the proximity of that figure to the total spent on the Hospital poor since 1819— who, it will be remembered, numbered only four by 1829³ — made the latter the obvious first court of appeal to clear the debt quickly and give least cause for any allegations of weakness in the experiment in poor relief itself.

This impression is confirmed when the Hospital's reaction to the

1. Report from Her Majesty's Commissioners for Inquiring into the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws in Scotland (Edinburgh, 1844), Sess. 1844 (557), vol. 20, Evidence of C. Naismith, 12 April 1843, p. 348. (Hereafter, P.P. Sess. 1844 (577), vol. 20).

2. S.R.A., TD 121/4, Abstract of the Treasurer's Accounts of Receipts and Disbursements of the Funds of St. John's Parish Glasgow, as applicable to the Maintenance of the Poor, Educational Purposes, etc., from 26 September, 1819, till 31st.. December, 1835 (n.p., n.d.). This is a printed copy, but the accounts for 1836 and till 30 September 1837 have been added in pencil, presumably at the end of the experiment by the treasurer. (Hereafter, Abstract of Accounts, 1819-35.)

3. See above, p. 223.

St. John's claim is examined. The Hospital directors decided it would be unprecedented, and perhaps illegal to pay the sum as an accumulated arrear over the last fourteen years. However, they would pay it if the St. John's kirk session was able to show that:

... from recent claims of unusual magnitude they have been involved in debt which they have not the means of discharging.¹

Only then did the St. John's session come out into the open and admit to the Hospital that:

... their debt has arisen principally since 1833. That the cause of the increased expenditure has been the great destitution produced by Cholera in 1832, and Typhus Fever in 1833, and also from the great and unlooked for extent of lunatic cases principally augmented in 1834 and 1835.²

The Hospital then agreed to pay the £461, and the St. John's session reappointed its committee "to report in regard to the future management of the funds and affairs of the Session."³ Six months later William Buchanan wrote to Chalmers and said they had used up all of the £461 to pay off their debts to the treasurer and some other accounts, but now they were in "comfortable circumstances", and were determined to continue for another six months and then decide their ultimate fate.⁴ In the meantime, on 21 June 1836, a sessional meeting was called, at which eleven deacons were also present, to decide on the future management of poor relief in the parish. The committee had also arranged that the St. John's session be relieved by the Town's Hospital of about one quarter of the sum spent on pauper lunatics. It considered that the session should cease to award prizes

1. S.R.O., CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 23 May 1836.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. C.P., CHA 4.246.63, 6 December 1836, W. Buchanan to T. Chalmers.

to scholars in the parochial schools, and that the salaries of its beadle and Presbytery and Synod clerk should not come out of the ordinary weekly collectons. It was recommended that a far stricter account should be kept of the three separate funds for pauperism, education, and the "general comfort" of the congregation, and each fund should have a separate treasurer. The chapel, that is St. Thomas, poor relief funds should also be kept district.

The St. John's kirk session records ended not long after this entry - on 3 October 1836.¹ The remainder of the story is supplied by the Hospital Minutes. Exactly one year after the parish records ended, the Hospital recorded that a communication from St. John's had been received, asking;

... to be henceforth assisted by the Hospital in the management of their poor, in the same manner as the other nine parishes.²

The Hospital records went on to quote in full from the St. John's session minute dated the 4 September 1837:

... the Session desired it to be recorded as their unanimous conviction that the system now for so many years acted on, in the parish, was perfectly adequate to meet the ordinary pauperism of any parish of a manageable population, but that the great increase in the population of St. John's - and the want of protection against the admission of paupers from the other parishes of the City, joined to the heavy claims on the funds of the Session, arising from the extra-ordinary expenditure in cases of lunacy; exposed, illegitimate and deserted children etc.etc. amounting during the 18 years which the session had carried on the management to £1,053 8s. 1d. had rendered it impossible for the Session longer to continue the system which had been acted on for so many years with much labour to the elders and deacons, but with much advantage, it was humbly hoped, to the community in general and to the parish of St. John's in particular.³

It would seem that the new parish of St. Thomas, had come onto

1. The next St. John's Kirk Session Record book began in 1846.

2. G.T.H.M., 3 October 1837.

3. Ibid.

the Hospital funds even sooner. In June 1836 it was recorded "by mistake" in their session minutes - presumably as opposed to their deacons' records - that they had 168 regular paupers and an unspecified number of occasional pensioners. This was a large increase on previous figures.¹ They were also receiving from the Hospital most of the money to pay for these.²

The debt incurred by St. John's parish proper by September 1837 - only nine months after Buchanan had written to Chalmers that all had been squared up and the financial situation of the parish was "comfortable" - was £229 8s. 0½d., which the Hospital agreed to pay.³ Therefore in one year, with no Hospital cases to fund, some of the lunacy burden relieved, the funding of the educational apparatus apparently prospering, and a renewed determination to ensure that the funds for the latter in no way detracted from the financial source of the ordinary weekly collections for the parish poor relief bill, St. John's still floundered and fell yet again into debt. In other words, it just could not cope with even the ordinary demands of poor relief it had agreed to meet. In October 1837 the Hospital also took on any of the St. John's paupers receiving more than 5/- a month from the

1. S.R.O. CH2/635.1, St. Thomas' KSR, 27 June 1836. See above, p. 200: the chapel district in 1824 held only thirty regular paupers.

2. Ibid.; the accounts for 1836 were set out as follows:
Expenditure: £26 17s. 6d. for 168 regular paupers, per month.

£3 12s. 2d. for occasional paupers, per month.

30 9s. 8d.

Collections: 7. 1s. 8d.

23. 8s. 0d.: Draft on Hospital, per month.

Interestingly, in 1837 Chalmers joined with the other patrons to petition the Glasgow Presbytery to change the clause in the Chapel's constitution he had fought for in 1822. That is, they now wanted the collections to go towards paying the ministers' stipend as opposed to relieving the poor of the parish: S.R.O., CH2/176.6, Glasgow Presbytery Records, 29 March, 3 May, 16 May 1837, pp. 435, 437-8, 461.

3. G.T.H.M., 3 October 1837.

session, and all orphans, deserted children and lunatics. Chalmers' Glasgow experiment had come to its conclusion.

In the Glasgow city archives there is a printed copy of the statement of accounts that was drawn up in 1835 and that Buchanan had sent to Chalmers.¹ What is particularly interesting about this copy of the treasurer's accounts is that the income and expenditure for the 1 January 1836 to the 30 September 1837 have been added by hand. Thus a final statement for the experiment from its inception to its close has survived. The figures in this account tally with those Chalmers gave in his 1841 work for the total income and expenditure for 1819 to 1837, which Chalmers in turn had presumably received from Buchanan.² However, each years' figures were itemised in the full abstract, and in isolation gave a different slant to Chalmers' interpretations of the overall totals.

Cage and Checkland, in their article on the St. John's experiment, base their conclusions on Cleland's 1833 table of accounts.³ They argue that it demonstrated that the total annual income was greater than the total annual expenditure on poor relief, religious and charitable institutions, and parochial schools, only for the years 1820, 1821, 1822, and 1824. From 1825 to 1833 the parish was running at an annual loss. They also dismiss Chalmers' claim that the output on poor relief alone should be measured in assessing his poor relief scheme, and argue that if St. John's had been a rural parish it would legally have had to meet all the costs for religious

1. S.R.A., TD 121/4, Abstract of Accounts 1819-35. S.R.O., CH 2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 23 May 1836: it was decided that the statement of accounts be printed and circulated.

2. See above, p. 271.

3. R.A. Cage and E.O.A. Checkland, 'Thomas Chalmers and Urban Poverty' in Philosophical Journal (Glasgow) 13, 1976, p. 49 ff.

and educational purposes as well as the poor relief bill.¹ However, to be fair to Chalmers, his primary aim had always been to show that the poor relief scheme worked so well there would be enough left over for education, but the funding of that education was not the central issue. His main contention was that poor relief would be more than adequately dealt with. In order to satisfactorily demonstrate that St. John's failed to do this it is necessary to look at the poor relief income and expenditure in isolation. In fact, as was pointed out in the previous chapter Chalmers later conceded that if education were to be provided for all of Scotland's rapidly growing population then the parishes would have to receive state funding for it.² This could of course be interpreted as Chalmers' way of neatly evading the issue. However, this is where the full table of accounts up to 1837 is revealing, and needs to be examined to extend beyond Cage and Checkland's analysis.

Chalmers concluded that although the poor relief structure of St. John's parish had ceased in 1837, its financial figure still bore out his theory that any parish - rural or industrial, large or small - could adequately fund its pauperism out of its voluntary church door collections. He put forward as incontrovertible proof the fact that the total income from the latter did not exceed the total spent on poor relief alone in St. John's for the 18 years of the experiment.

1. Ibid., Cage and Checkland also state that if the deacons had not taken on the Hospital poor in 1822, they would have had a total balance of £146 as opposed to a deficit of £285 by 1833. However, by 1829 there were only four Hospital poor left, and when the sum was refunded in 1836 by the Hospital the St. John's session still ran into debt. This suggests the potential £146 balance Cage and Checkland refer to would likewise have eventually been eroded and the final closure of the experiment would perhaps have been delayed but would in all probability still have taken place.

2. See above, pp. 227-265.

Yet, even taking Chalmers on his own terms, and ignoring for the moment Cage and Checkland's arguments for including the other parochial expenditure, if the total collections and expenditure on poor relief alone is considered for individual years, it is apparent that apart from 1829 to 1832 inclusive the poor relief system was running at a loss from 1827 to 1837. These individual deficits were cancelled out in Chalmers' statistics due to the large surplus of income the parish had accrued during his personal incumbency in the parish.

The full statement of accounts (overleaf) reveals that as the years passed the poor relief expenditure steadily mounted. True, the population we have seen was also growing, but that was where the moral and religious sides of the experiment were supposed to play their part in increasing church attendance and so the church collections.¹ Yet Chalmers had asserted that with every year that passed the poor relief expenditure would be easy to control no matter how large the parish was, since gradually the old sessional poor would die off, and the deacons would simply ensure that few more paupers were admitted by applying rigorous scrutinies and encouraging the poor to be tended to by the rest of the community. Logically, the fact that the poor relief expenditure was growing for most of the last decade of the scheme, indicated that an increasing number of new paupers were in fact being taken on its rolls. For example, in 1836 £463 was spent on poor relief while the collections only amounted to £322. This contrasts with the total of £322 spent on new and old poor in 1819 to 1820, when there was an income of £641, and indeed with the £66 6s. Od. spent on the 20 new paupers admitted between 1819 and 1823. So,

1. It could be argued that there would not have been enough room in the church for a parish of 12,000 – 13,000. However, it has already been seen that the bid to fill St. John's church and chapel with parishioners was not very successful; see above, pp. 209–10, 248.

Abstract of the Treasurer's Accounts of Receipts and Disbursements of the Funds of St. John's Parish, Glasgow,
as applicable to the maintenance of the Poor, Educational Purposes, etc., from 26th September, 1819, till
31st December, 1835. From 1st January, 1836 till 30th September, 1837.

RECEIPTS AS FOLLOWS	1819-20	1820-21	1821-22	1822-23	1823-24	1824-25	1825-26	1826-27	1827-28	1828-29	1829-30	1830-31	1831-32	1832-33 15 Months	1834	1835	TOTALS	From 1st January 1836 till 30 September 1837
From Collections at Church and Chapel Doors..... £	538 5 12	466 4 5	475 12 0	438 1 7	459 18 10	415 18 9	391 11 4	362 16 4	365 1 2	371 2 5	407 2 6	358 17 3	450 17 4	496 7 2	407 12 11	382 16 3	6730 6 92	564 12 0
Do. at Church Doors from Evening Congregation.....	103 11 9	109 3 8	108 14 4	87 2 9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	401 12 6	...
Seat Rents from Evening Congregation.....	163 8 8	189 10 11	77 13 3	36 15 6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	469 8 4	...
Legacies and Donations.....	77 16 11	15 0 0	3 0 0	6 11 6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	241 6 11	461 17 10
Collections for Religious and Charitable Purposes, not Parochial.....	168 12 0	268 13 7	298 2 9	134 9 0	116 16 6	135 5 0	19 0 0	123 0 0	95 0 0	32 0 0	21 0 0	30 0 0	84 0 0	68 16 8	28 11 9	160 0 2	1793 7 6	211 3 10
Interest on Bank Account, and from City of Glasgow.....	5 12 8	7 0 5	12 11 10	6 11 0	30 1 7	30 8 5	30 12 1	31 0 9	27 2 1	26 1 3	25 0 0	25 0 0	25 0 0	25 0 0	25 0 0	25 0 0	357 2 13	...
Rent of Mortcloth.....	2 16 6	1 16 0	0 12 0	0 16 0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	36 9 0	4 0 9
General Session Fund for Education.....	...	...	24 18 0	24 18 0	24 18 0	24 18 0	24 18 0	24 18 0	27 8 6	35 0 0	33 2 6	27 10 0	27 10 0	34 7 6	27 10 0	27 10 0	339 6 6	...
Collections for St. John's Chapel Funds.....	...	...	...	...	93 19 0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	125 0 0	19 0 0	12 8 0	400 7 0	...
Do. for St. John's Parochial Schools.....	...	...	...	...	165 17 3	...	...	...	61 2 3	35 1 0	42 0 0	47 0 0	57 12 0	21 0 0	26 0 0	20 0 0	530 12 6	101 9 3
Stirling Session on Account of a Lunatic Pauper.....	...	...	...	...	...	50 2 0	30 11 9	31 8 0	24 9 7	...	15 6 9	15 6 0	14 6 0	14 6 0	14 6 0	14 6 0	241 8 1	27 2 0
Lockhart's Mortification for Sabbath Schools.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	27 0 0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	40 12 0	...
Collection for forming New Road through College Ground.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	10 0 0	...	...	...	...	...	...	10 0 0	...
Share of Dr. Bell's Legacy.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	29 0 0	...	10 0 0	39 0 0	...
Collections for Sabbath Evening Schools.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	20 0 0	23 8 0	43 8 0	34 4 8
Pensioners, Allowance to their Families.....	...	...	...	...	...	6 2 0	24 0 0	22 1 9	35 2 1	37 19 8	43 2 5	55 18 5	17 6 7	36 17 11	...	8 14 8	287 5 10	...
Balance due to the Treasurer.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	395 1 6	229 8 0
£	1062 3 72	1050 9 11	1003 5 21	733 5 4	891 11 25	659 4 8	558 13 21	661 8 5	675 18 10	609 15 9	594 11 6	618 5 8	693 15 10	844 14 3	610 13 7	790 16 6	2455 14 10	1633 18 4
DISBURSEMENTS AS FOLLOWS																	Balance due 31st Dec. 1835.	
To Paupers, Lunatics, Orphans, Foundlings, Coffins, &c.....	322 0 9	274 14 7	331 11 9	377 6 6	364 8 8	304 7 9	275 9 9	355 19 9	369 19 2	385 6 9	356 11 8	329 6 4	395 14 10	523 2 11	408 3 6	463 2 0	5816 6 10	395 1 6
Religious and Charitable Purposes, not Parochial.....	168 12 0	268 13 7	298 2 9	134 9 0	116 13 6	135 5 0	19 0 0	123 0 0	95 0 0	32 0 0	21 0 0	30 0 0	84 0 0	68 16 8	28 11 9	160 0 2	1783 7 6	211 3 10
Cost of Mortcloth.....	75 8 6	41 4 10	44 1 6	43 10 6	66 4 1	23 9 1	26 13 0	19 5 0	22 12 0	14 13 8	18 6 0	22 1 5	23 19 8	27 19 10	28 4 8	26 17 8	484 18 6	149 12 9
Precentor and Beadle for Evening Cong. Door-keepers, Lighting, &c.....	35 15 6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	44 1 3	...
Soup Kitchen and Coals for Poor.....	44 1 3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Prizes for Parochial Schools, Stationery, &c.....	14 18 10	9 18 6	3 3 0	...	...	16 15 0	36 14 3	9 11 0	11 16 0	13 14 6	12 9 0	16 19 6	9 10 0	9 2 6	9 12 0	9 6 0	183 10 1	...
Salary to Rev. Mr. Irving as Assistant.....	150 0 0	150 0 0	100 0 0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	400 0 0	...
Sacramental Elements for St. John's Chapel and Evening Congregation.....	5 13 8	6 11 6	5 4 7	1 4 0	10 0 0	18 6 0	18 18 0	8 18 0	18 18 0	18 18 0	18 18 0	18 18 0	18 18 0	25 4 0	12 12 0	12 12 0	229 13 9	15 10 7
Teachers' Salaries, Education of Poor, Insurance, and Repairs on Schools.....	...	50 11 11	109 14 2	83 0 0	271 11 11	112 7 0	164 15 0	11 0 5	97 17 8	110 0 9	120 10 6	142 5 6	97 12 0	108 0 6	115 8 6	106 14 9	1801 10 7	101 9 3
Lent to City of Glasgow for Endowment of one Parochial School.....	...	...	...	500 0 0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	500 0 0	...
St. John's Chapel Funds.....	...	...	...	...	95 2 0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	125 0 0	19 0 0	12 8 0	401 10 0	...
Support of a Stirling Lunatic Pauper.....	...	...	...	...	...	50 2 0	42 9 9	29 13 0	14 6 7	15 6 9	14 6 0	15 6 0	13 4 0	18 14 0	14 6 0	14 6 0	242 0 1	21 5 0
Sabbath Evening Schools from Lockhart's Mortification.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	10 12 0	40 12 0	...
Making New Road through College Ground.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	10 0 0	...	...	...	...	...	...	10 0 0	...
Interest.....	...	...	...	...	2 3 0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5 0 0	...	...	3 10 6	10 15 6	...
Alterations on School for Dr. Bell's System.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3 17 2	...	65 0 0	68 17 2	...
St. John's Sabbath Evening Schools.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	20 0 0	23 8 0	43 8 0	34 4 8
Families of Pensioners from Allowance.....	...	...	...	...	...	5 0 0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	8 14 8	287 5 10	...
£	816 10 6	801 15 0	891 17 10	1139 10 0	926 8 2	660 11 10	588 19 9	731 7 8	677 17 5	733 3 1	601 10 1	653 14 7	695 2 7	927 4 2	693 12 3	916 11 11	2455 14 10	1633 18 4

Committee: William Collins
Matthew Montgomery
Dr. M.S. Buchanan
William Buchanan, Convener.

"This accounting paid by the Town's Hospital for the maintaining
of the Poor found on the Hospital at 19th September 1819, which was
a supplementary burden the session took."

from January 1836 to September 1837, the poor relief expenditure was £705 set against a total of £564 from the collections. This was a far cry indeed from Chalmers' confident prediction of 1819 that "in a few years" the voluntary church collections of any size of parish would cope with poor relief if managed along his guidelines.¹

The graph overleaf summarises this information by setting the collections against the poor relief expenditure for each individual year. The upsurge in expenditure on paupers in the later years coincides with the years of economic depression or epidemics: 1827-9, 1832-4, and 1835-7, when there was the onset of another extensive industrial depression. In other words, Chalmers' ideal of a moral society, encouraged by the 'natural' system of charity, where each looked to his social responsibilities of family relationship and neighbourliness, if it ever existed in St. John's, just was not able to cope with such pressures, belying his premise that the economic base of a society should not alter its solution of social problems. It also, therefore, casts doubts on his assertions that such problems were based on human nature in the first place.

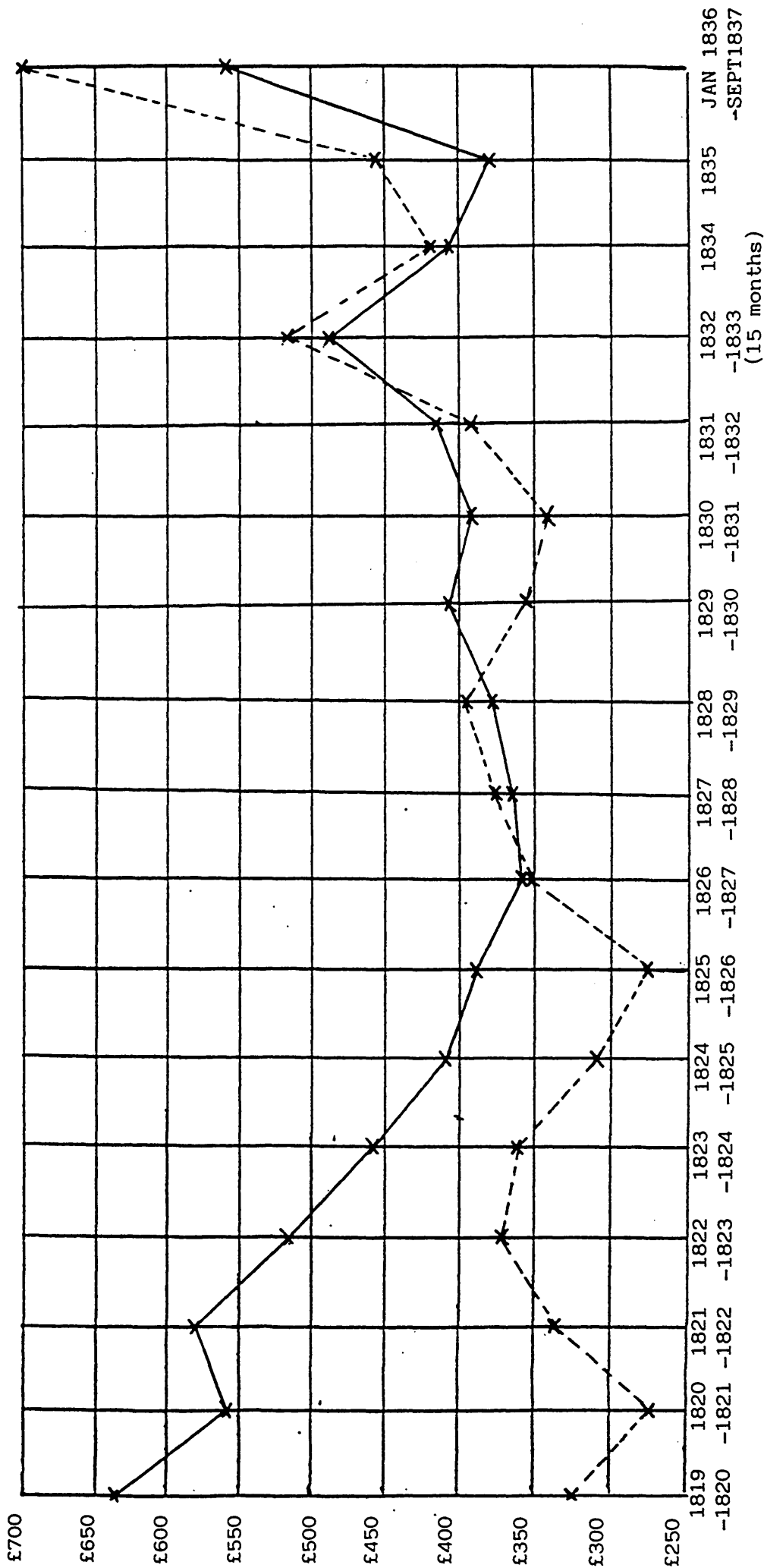
Chalmers did argue that his system should not be judged by its performance in "rarely occurring seasons of depressions".² He even admitted to the occasional necessity for a public voluntary subscription in such crises. However, the frequency of those depressions during the lifetime of the experiment made them

1. T. Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 1, C.W., vol. 14, p. 268.

2. T. Chalmers, Sufficiency of a Parochial System, C.W., vol. 21, p. 101.

TABLE 5: GRAPH OF INCOME (FROM COLLECTIONS) AND POOR RELIEF EXPENDITURE IN ST. JOHN'S, 1819-1839

— COLLECTIONS
 --- POOR RELIEF EXPENDITURE



unexceptional and part of the norm for an industrial parish.¹ The latter was going to have to find a way to cope with them. In six of the last ten years of the St. John's experiment, Chalmers' system had not been able to do so. His arguments, therefore, begged the whole issue, and his use of statistics disguised the fact that the St John's poor relief system had not been a viable financial venture, even when considered on his own terms.

Echoes of the theoretical framework of the St. John's experiment can still be heard today. The idea that the more the state provides the more people will expect and sponge from it has a strong following. The theoretical debate continues, on the nature of poverty and on the human response to different methods of coping with it. This thesis has shown, however, that in practice the St. John's experiment did in fact fail.

For the parishioners themselves there remains little evidence to indicate their degree of comfort under the St. John's poor relief regime. In all his written works, Chalmers gave very few examples of his four natural fountains of relief in operation. Even at the time he was castigated for not providing evidence of the material welfare of the poor in the parish. At least one commentator dryly remarked that since the Town Hospital allowance was so small, the poor of St. John's probably did not complain, particularly since some of the St. John's agents were in a position to obtain work for them or

1. The parishes in the Highlands of Scotland perhaps typified Chalmers' ideas of official poor relief being kept to a minimum and being supplemented by other sources. For example, Report of a Committee of the General Assembly, on an Inquiry into the Management of the Poor, 1818, p. 32: in some Highland parishes the average poor relief allowance was not over 1/5d. a month. Yet in the late 1830's and 1840's the Highlands encountered severe economic and social problems as a result of the potato famine, and it was highlighted that the official poor relief system was inadequate even in this supposedly ideal rural setting.

give occasional hand-outs.¹ This serves as a sharp reminder of how little is known of living standards in the early nineteenth century, and indeed of the extent of the charity of private societies and individuals that Cleland was convinced was far more important than that administered by the church and Hospital.² Taking that into consideration it is probably valid to conclude that the St. John's poor considered themselves no worse off than the poor of the other Glasgow parishes.

There is some evidence for the sessional care of the poor in St. John's after 1837. For example, in 1839 the deacon Campbell Naismith wrote in answer to a letter from Chalmers, and told him that the number of paupers in the parish had greatly increased since the experiment had ended.³ This was undoubtedly what Chalmers wanted to hear as demonstrating that once his parochial restraints had been removed pauperism would run rampant. However, Naismith gave no precise figures, and added that the deacons' accounts had not in fact been kept up to date. (Interestingly, this shows that the deacons did not simply disappear with the close of the experiment.)⁴ In corroboration of his assertion, Naismith did write that the treasurer's clerk had told him that when the parish joined the Hospital system of relief in 1837 they had a surplus left over from the collections once the sessional cases had been paid because of the fact that the Hospital paid for any case over 4/6d. a month. Yet by 1839 the session had to ask the Hospital for £6 to £12 a month simply

1. J. Hill Burton, 'Poor Laws and Pauperism in Scotland', Westminster Review, 36 (London, 1841), p. 402.

2. See above, p. 56..

3. C.P., CHA 4.285.30, 13 July 1839, C. Naismith to T. Chalmers.

4. P.P. Sess 1844 (557), vol. 20, Evidence of Dr. Brown, p. 360: the deacons of St. John's continued after 1837 "but they do not go on with so much ardour as formerly".

to keep paying their sessional paupers on a pension of under 5/- a month.¹ Naismith did add that all the Glasgow churches were experiencing reduced collections and therefore reduced poor relief funds. This information may have confirmed Chalmers in his belief that pauperism was not simply the result of economic need, but, because of man's nature, increased in proportion to any increase of public funds available for its relief. Certainly Naismith himself was still a believer in the original scheme and its emphasis on a moral solution to an essentially moral problem. This was also the case with William Buchanan, who wrote to Chalmers at this time and stated that many of the deacons still believed in the scheme.² Like Naismith, Buchanan's loyalty to Chalmers' premises was unswerving:

If ever the poor of our land are to be provided for as they ought it is to be through a system such as was so triumphantly carried on in St. John's for nineteen years.

any other methods of providing poor relief he considered to be:

... just so many allowments to vice and idleness, and if a system of some scriptural education and pastoral superintendence are not adopted throughout the parishes of our land it requires no great foresight to see the day when our jails, Bridewells, and Houses of refuge will all require to be enlarged and their number increased.³

Chalmers' correspondence with Buchanan in 1841 revealed that he was serious in his proposal in his 1841 work on St. John's for a repeat of the St. John's experiment in a smaller parish of 2,000, and

1. C.P., CHA 4.285.30, 13 July 1839, C. Naismith to T. Chalmers; G.T.H.M., 17 August 1841: St. John's was sending fifty-six paupers to the Hospital, the second highest from the ten city parishes: P.P. Sess. 1844, (557), vol. 20, p. 36, Dr. Brown's evidence: in 1837 St. John's had eighty paupers, by 13 April 1843 they had 123.

2. G.U.L., MS. 1036, 11 and 30 July 1839, T. Chalmers to W. Buchanan; and 7 January 1841, W. Buchanan to T. Chalmers.

3. Ibid.

was still confident that such an experiment would promote

... the solution of Pauperism and the Extension of our Church.¹

There is no evidence that such an attempt was put into practice. Up to 1843 and the Disruption Chalmers was still very much involved in the church extension programme and the effort to reduce the size of the parishes in Scotland. However, there was no repeat of the experiment in poor relief administration in those new churches. The Disruption and the 1845 Poor Relief (Scotland) Act finally put paid to even the hope of such an experiment occurring again. Perhaps if he had insisted in 1819 that the new St. John's parish only embraced a population of 2,000 the final outcome of his experiment would have been different. He was so emphatic, and so convinced of the basis and the successful outcome of his scheme, however, that he was willing to take on anything, and so prove in one grand gesture that it could easily be accomplished.

The survival for nineteen years of the experiment is proof in itself that Chalmers inspired a scheme which, operated by a central core of devoted agents, made a very prolonged and determined effort to succeed. Yet even if that 'success' is acknowledged, Chalmers still made no attempt to prove in any tangible form that his parish became the moral, educated, caring and Christian community he had claimed would evolve. Perhaps if he had started with a parish of 2,000 he would have been able to point to definite indications of the existence of such a community, and not simply repeatedly stated his negative 'proof' that if little was spent on poor relief in St. John's then it automatically followed that the potential claimants under the old system were being reformed and relieved by their local agents, friends

1. G.U.L., MS. 1036, 15 and 26 October 1841, T. Chalmers to W. Buchanan.

and neighbours. But the fact is that Chalmers did not insist on such a small parish in 1819, but claimed his system would even operate in a densely populated city area. By 1841 it was too late to do so. If there ever had been a chance for his voluntary poor relief scheme to work it disappeared as national events overtook him in the shape of the Disruption in 1843 and the 1845 Poor Relief Act.¹

Chalmers' experience in poor relief continued to be recognised after the Disruption, and he was among the many churchmen interviewed by the 1844 Poor Relief Commission. He reiterated and summarised his theories in his evidence before them:

Wherever you superinduce Christianity, you stimulate and quicken into activity all the natural good principles - such as the compassion of the poor to the poor, and the affection of relatives towards each other. But even apart from Christianity, and trusting to the mere natural influence of these principles, I would infinitely rather leave the poor to the full influence of those principles, as they operate naturally, than I would have them intromitted with, distracted, and deranged, in the operation of a system of public charity.²

Chalmers' outlook on pauperism as a moral problem came across strongly in this evidence. When asked if he relieved "bad characters" in St. John's he replied that he would only do so after much remonstrance. Four times he was asked point blank if he would give relief to the mother of an illegitimate child. After much prevarication, he answered he would, as a private individual, but that no organised system of public charity should incorporate the relief of such cases.³ Chalmers' second successor in St. John's also came across as believing immorality was the main cause of pauperism. He put unemployment at the bottom of his list of causes, after

1. See below, pp. 346-51.

2. P.P. Sess. 1844 (577), vol. 20, 25 March 1843, Evidence of T. Chalmers, p. 271.

3. Ibid., p. 272.

"improvidence, profligacy and vice".¹

It has been seen in previous chapters that this attention to the moral character of the poor was put into practice by some at least of the deacons in St. John's.² The 1844 Poor Relief Report carried more evidence of this. For example, Campbell Naismith said that invariably the monthly meetings of the deacons looked at the moral character of individual claimants.³ George Heggie stated that if claimants were known to be "undeserving" the kirk session did not relieve them if they could avoid doing so.⁴ Naismith was also asked some general questions about the moral state of the parish of St. John's. He replied that this was helped by the poor relief system. However, when he was asked if he had any personal knowledge of the system reclaiming paupers of "indifferent character" and making them "industrious and respectable citizens", he could not answer positively. Indeed, the direct question of whether the system had made people friendlier and increased private charity brought forward this reply:

We endeavoured to produce that, but it was not produced to a great extent. There were kindly feelings displayed by some towards their neighbours in worse circumstances than themselves.⁵

It is significant that no more positive statement on the existence of a parish community that the above could be drawn from someone as dedicated to Chalmers' system as Naismith had proved

1. Ibid., p. 360.

2. See above, pp. 172-4.

3. P.P. Sess. 1844 (577), vol. 20, Evidence of C. Naismith, p. 347.

4. Ibid., Evidence of G. Heggie, p. 362.

5. Ibid., Evidence of C. Naismith, pp. 348-9.

himself to be. Having said that, it must be added that William Davie the town clerk who became a deacon of St. John's in 1825, stated in his evidence that St. John's was better than the other Glasgow parishes with regard to cases brought before the criminal court, and that this was due to the work of the agency, the education of children, and the superintendence of the poor.¹

By 1844, at least one of the deacons had reached the conclusion that Chalmers' system could not cope with industrial poverty, even if the parishes in the towns were reduced in size. William Brown, a deacon in St John's during Chalmers' ministry there, 1819-23, said the kirk sessions could have a great moral influence on the people, but in Glasgow there was a growing class of:

... worthless poor, whom it would be impossible to manage without some general agency.²

The commission as a whole agreed with Brown in the sense that it came down in favour of a centralised public relief system as opposed to Chalmers' stress on individual voluntary help. The history of poor relief administration over the next century was also to develop along those lines, culminating finally in the total control of relief passing to the Government and a national system of relief.

One final question remains before leaving Glasgow and St. John's. That is, how did the rest of the city develop in its poor relief administration during these years of the St. John's experiment, and how, if indeed at all, was it affected by St. John's? These will form the subject of the remainder of this chapter.

Throughout this thesis so far the religious and philosophical

1. Ibid., Evidence of W. Davie, p. 356; W. Keddie, Memorials of St. John's Congregation, Glasgow (Glasgow, 1874), p. 10.

2. P.P. Sess. 1844 (577), vol. 20, Evidence of W. Brown, p. 446.

principles underlying the various approaches to poverty and its relief in Scotland have been emphasised. Yet, the pragmatic approach must also be considered. The Glasgow town council as a body was concerned about the total cost of poor relief in the city - a financial burden that lay heaviest upon the middle classes. It has already been pointed out that a factor in Chalmers being allowed to set up the St. John's experiment was the urgency of the overall problem in the city and the desperation of the council to reduce its ever-increasing poor relief bill.¹ Indeed, in January 1820, the town council decided to buy a Methodist chapel in Great Hamilton Street for £3,500 in order to create a tenth city parish, St. James. It was openly stated in the council records that such a parish would relieve the Tron and St. John's of some of their pauperism, and so forward:

... the fair trial of the plan for reducing the assessment for the poor suggested by the revd, Dr. Chalmers.²

Given such expense and commitment on the part of the council, and the radical shake-up of the poor relief structure it was willing to countenance in the abolition of the General Session's oversight of parochial relief as a result of the St. John's experiment,³ it was natural that the council wanted to monitor the new system of relief that had replaced the old one. In February 1821 the council set about negotiating with the individual kirk sessions over how their poor should be relieved. No longer did the General Session exist to re-channel the surplus collections of the wealthier parishes into the inadequate funds of the poorer ones. The question remained,

1. See above, pp. 86-9, 126-7.

2. G.B.R., 28 January and 14 February 1820.

3. See above, pp. 122-6.

therefore, of how those poorer parishes would keep as many ordinary poor as before. It was agreed that those of their paupers who required a pension of over 5/- a month would continue to be relieved by the Hospital. However, the poorer parishes were even unable to completely fund all of their pensioners below that sum out of their own collections. St. John's had chosen to stay aloof from the Hospital altogether, and was pledged to both maintain all its own poor out of its collections and send none to the Hospital. Rather than simply lower the rate at which the poor from the other parishes could be admitted to the Hospital, which would have put an even greater strain on that body's administration, each of the other city parishes were given the option of applying to the council and Hospital for a proportion of the assessment to look after any 'surplus' sessional poor on an allowance of under 5/- a month. They would be allowed to disburse that money themselves alongwith payments out of their collections to their enrolled paupers. However, they had to provide the council with lists of the paupers on their rolls, ensure each pauper had a legal settlement, and agree with each other on a uniform scale of rates.¹

Chalmers hoped that as a result of the great example and success of St. John's, all the other Glasgow parishes would forego their right to apply for a share of the assessment, and would endeavour to copy him in eventually supplying all their poor solely from their collections. He did not expect this to be immediate, but was confident that once St. John's had proved itself it would take place. It never did, and indeed he gave as one reason for the final conclusion of the experiment the discouraging effect on the agency of

1. G.B.R., 20 February and 23 March 1821.

the lack of enthusiasm of the other Glasgow ministers and elders. It is interesting to note here that by December 1823 Chalmers himself seems to have been discouraged by the lack of imitation of his scheme so far, and this seems to have been another factor in his readiness to leave for St. Andrews. William Collins wrote to him in St. Andrews:

You are quite right as to the hopelessness of ever producing conviction in Glasgow on the subject of Pauperism. Their blind obstinacy and hostility would have perpetually disturbed your spirit.¹

The individual reactions of the Glasgow parishes will be considered later on in this chapter. First of all, it is elucidating to examine the controversy within the council itself over the scheme. In December 1822, Andrew Rankin, a merchant bailie, proposed a motion that the individual sessions be asked to conduct a survey of their poor and their relief, and that the council use these surveys to assess the progress of the new method of poor relief management in the city. This was carried out, and a committee was appointed by the council in February 1823 to assess those returns from the individual sessions, and to consider a report by the Town Hospital on a recent fall in the assessment.² The council had asked the Hospital whether the reduction in the assessment from £12,560 in 1821 to £9,213 in 1822,³ was due to the new management of relief since the demise of the General Session's role, or to some other reason. The Hospital concluded that it had nothing to do with the new system, but rather was the result of increased employment and low prices. They added

1. St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.235, 19 December 1823, W. Collins to T. Chalmers.

2. G.B.R., 26 December 1822 and 4 February 1823.

3. J. Cleland, Statistical and Population Tables, (Glasgow, 1820), p. 127

that the new system, far from contributing to a reduction in the assessment, was wasteful since under it the wealthier parishes were able to keep their surplus collections while the poorer ones had to make up their deficits by drawing on the assessment as opposed to the communal collection fund that had existed when the General Session had played a part in poor relief. In other words, the assessment in 1822 would have been even lower had the old system still been in operation.

The town council committee took ten months to report its findings, on 19 December 1823. It came to a similar conclusion as the Hospital report. It found that five of the city's sessions were running at a profit as regards the income from their collections set against their poor relief expenditure: £1,149 as opposed to £809.¹ The five in question were St. John's, the Northwest, Outer High, St. George's and St. James'. The remaining five - St. Andrew's, St. Enoch's, St. Mungo's, the College and the Tron - were running at a loss: £581 as opposed to £1,605. The deficit from the latter, of £1,024 had been made up by the Hospital out of the assessment,² However, those five poorer parishes were still sending as many paupers as before, who required assistance amounting to over 5/- a month. It recommended that the five better-off parishes use their surplus collections to fund those of their own parishioners who were Hospital pensioners, and that the sessions make annual returns of their income and expenditure.³ These conclusions were agreed to by the council in February 1824, objections were voiced in the council in March, but they were finally passed in December of that year.

1. G.B.R., 19 December 1823.

2. These returns were made for 1822-23 and 1823-24, but apparently ceased after that date; A. Ranken, A Letter Addressed to the Rev. Dr. Chalmers (Glasgow, 1830), p. 19.

3. G.B.R., 20 February, 5 March and 7 December 1824.

Part of the reason there was some hesitation on the part of the Glasgow town council to take steps to allocate surplus church collections came from direct pressure on it from the St. John's agents and their council supporters. When Chalmers had left the city in November 1823, a farewell public dinner had been held for him. It was attended by 340 prominent citizens, among whom were many of his supporters on and off the council over the past nine years. For example, C.S. Parker, Robert Findlay, James Dennistoun, Robert Dalglish, James Cleland, James Montieth, and Henry Monteith.¹ Their championship of the Chalmers' cause was to continue after his departure and is documented in Chalmers' correspondence. At the beginning of January 1824, Ewing, although no longer a town councillor, wrote to Chalmers informing him of the report of the council committee of December 1823, and enclosed a copy of it. He did this despite the fact that, as he freely admitted to Chalmers, the report was private until it came out officially.²

It was natural that Chalmers and his supporters were against any tampering with the churches' surplus collection by the council and Hospital, since it was contrary to their aim of individual sessions having an incentive to minimise their poor relief expenditure by having complete control over their own funds. The ultimate aim at this stage was that this incentive would result in all the sessions creating a surplus, and they needed the freedom to use that in whatever way was best for the particular parish, for example, in the education of its young. William Collins had already been approached

1. Farewell Memorial of Dr. Chalmers, (Glasgow, 1823), p. 15.

2. St. A.U.L., MS. 30385.284, 2 January 1824, J. Ewing to T. Chalmers.

in December 1823 by William Graham, a merchant councillor in the city from 1820-1824. Graham was seeking information about St. John's specific poor relief situation, and asked how he could defend it.¹ In reply to these letters from Collins and Ewing, Chalmers once more started to recruit support. For example, he sent his 1823 Statement on Poor Relief to John Hamilton of Northpark, a wealthy Glasgow merchant. Hamilton was impressed by it, and told Chalmers it had removed any doubts he had had about the scheme and the good its imitation would do for the other Glasgow parishes and the city as a whole.²

Unfortunately, the evidence is sketchy as to what precisely took place over the next few months of 1824 and the reason the council delayed over finally proclaiming that surplus collections were to be used for the upkeep of the Hospital poor of the respective parishes. That Chalmers' supporters had brought pressure to bear and so had had some influence on the delay seems probable from the above letters, and also from an entry in the council records of March 1824, where the merchant councillor Archibald Lawson advised delaying the measure since some of the sessions might as a result:

... give up the plan of separate management now in progress with a view to the reduction and eventual abolition of the compulsory assessment.³

In the meantime, one of the St. John's elders, Alexander McGregor, was elected on to the 1824-25 council. When the measure was finally agreed upon in December 1824, McGregor, in his maiden speech, defended the case for St. John's exclusion from the motion and was seconded by Robert Dalglish. Their amendment was passed, with the

1. St. A.U.L., MS. 30385.233, 13 December 1823, W. Collins to T. Chalmers.

2. St. A.U.L., MS. 30385.397, 8 January 1824, J. Hamilton to T. Chalmers.

3. G.B.R., 5 March 1824.

result that St. John's and the Outer High parish, both of whom had no Hospital poor anyway, were excluded. Henry Paul wrote to Chalmers to let him know the outcome, and added that there were only a few on the council who were opposed to the St. John's system.¹ The St. John's minister, Patrick McFarlan agreed with Paul, and wrote optimistically of the continuing support of the council.² It was ironic, however, that for the other eight city parishes the new system of poor relief that Chalmers had helped to bring about in Glasgow had resulted in their increased dependence and accountability to the secular authorities, the very thing Chalmers was opposed to.

Despite this supposed increased support on the council itself, Andrew Ranken continued to plague St. John's. He did not give up his attempt to discredit the St. John's system for its detrimental impact on the finances of the city as a whole. In Chalmers' printed works after 1822 he often referred to the intransigence of the Glasgow authorities and their reluctance to aid the spread of the St. John's system. Yet it has been seen that, if anything, the Glasgow authorities had bent over backwards to accommodate Chalmers and his influential friends in the initial establishment of St. John's. Chalmers himself had nothing but praise for them until 1822 when he first referred to his "opponents in Glasgow." From then on, his relationship with the Glasgow authorities in print at least, deteriorated, as indeed did his popularity with some sections of the Glasgow public, who in 1823 saw his departure as

1. C.P., CHA 4.37.52, 10 December 1824, H. Paul to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.46.12, 11 April 1825, P. McFarlan to T. Chalmers.

an abandonment of the city and its problems.¹

Ranken was convinced that Chalmers' description of opposition in Glasgow was a direct attack on himself and his involvement with the findings of the 1823 town council report against the new poor relief system. In reply, in 1830 he published a pamphlet entitled A Letter Addressed to the Rev. Dr. Chalmers. In this, he presented several powerful arguments against St. John's in particular and the poor relief system generally in Glasgow since the General Session had ceased to play a part. The arguments against the general system were largely a repetition of the council committee report of 1824. As regards St. John's itself he disputed Chalmers' statement that it was the poorest parish in the city, stating that seven of the other parishes had more paupers than it. St. John's also had an advantage, he argued, of poaching congregations, and so collections, from the other parishes. Certainly, its collection for the year Ranken cited, 1821-2, was by far the highest: six of the ten city parishes were well below £200, while St. John's was £455. He concluded that St. John's and the resulting poor relief system as a whole in Glasgow had not improved the general situation. The poorer parishes still needed the assessment to compensate for small collections and large numbers of poor inhabitants. He disagreed with Chalmers' claims that those large numbers of poor could be greatly diminished by greater diligence and

1. T. Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 2, C.W., vol. 15, pp. 37 ff., 92-3; vol.3, C.W., vol. 16, p. 171; Defence of the Rev. Dr. Chalmers: Addressed to the Thinking and Unprejudiced Part of the Inhabitants of Glasgow (Glasgow, 1823), pp. 10-11; A. Ranken, op. cit. pp. 5-11.

scrutiny by the elders. On the contrary, he asserted that even before St. John's appeared on the scene the other Glasgow sessions were as strict as they could be in admitting poor people on to their rolls, and in fact the 1818 General Session scrutiny report had found in some cases of the old and sick that the sessions had been "too parsimonious".¹

It is now time to look at those individual Glasgow kirk sessions and consider what evidence exists for their dealings in poor relief after 1819 and how they were affected by Chalmers and St. John's. The survival of the kirk session records has been poor for Glasgow in the first half of the nineteenth century. Including St. John's, only four of the ten parish records have been traced.² These records, together with the town council and Hospital minutes afford an interesting glimpse into parochial poor relief even if the full picture is not available.

As has already been described, the 1823 council and Hospital reports revealed that five parishes did not even attempt to follow Chalmers' system in 1821 of coping with all their poor out of their own collections, but rather continued to relieve what poor they could and send the remainder to the Hospital. The five were: St. Andrew's, St. Enoch's, the College, St. Mungo's, and the Tron. The other four did make some attempt to remain self-sufficient: the North West/St. David's, St. George's, St. James', and the Outer High. However, by 1833, twelve years after the change in the relief system, all four reverted to the Hospital, having been unable to provide for all their

1. A. Ranken, op. cit., pp. 5-11, 12, 25-6, 27.

2. These four are St. John's, St. Mungo's/North, St. George's, and the College/Blackfriars. The first three are all to be found in the S.R.O.; those of the College are still in the keeping of the session clerk.

parochial paupers by themselves.¹ As Ranken pointed out in 1830 these four were among the wealthiest parishes as regards their income from collections, but with the fewest number of paupers.² Yet in all four cases, the reason for them reverting to the general city fund was lack of money. For example, St. George's, the parish with the highest income, £333 after St. John's of £455 in 1822, wrote to the Hospital in 1827 that it had wanted to supply its paupers from its own collections, had been very vigilant and investigated all applications thoroughly yet "we have found this of late quite impracticable".³ Likewise, the other three parishes all reported that their own funds had been exhausted and they were consequently in debt.

Of the four parishes that took part in Chalmers' independent system of parochial relief, there is evidence that three of them did not have the wholehearted support of their ministers or elders. The opposition of Andrew Ranken has been documented above. What has not been mentioned so far, however, is that he was an influential elder in the parish of St. David's. Indeed, in his 1830 work he stated that his position as such gave added credulity to his opposition to the system since at that point St. David's was still independent and looked the strongest financially of all the city parishes, but he believed the system to be unfair for the poorer ones. The minister of St. David's between 1827-31, David Welsh, had not even studied the St. John's system - the financial soundness of St. David's apparently

1. G.T.H.M., 23 February 1826; 30 August, 15 and 27 November 1827; 20 September 1832; 19 February 1833.

2. A. Ranken, op. cit., p. 12. The collections of the five poorest parishes ranged in 1821 from £77 to £181, the number of their sessional poor from 121 to 241; four of the five richest had incomes ranging from £267 to £455 and the numbers of their sessional poor ranged from 59 to 126. The fifth one, the North West parish had an income of £112, but had only 31 poor in 1821 and 38 in 1822.

3. G.T.H.M., 15 November 1827.

owing far more simply to the wealth of its congregation and inhabitants than to any theoretical commitment to Chalmers and St. John's.¹ Nevertheless, it too had to come on to the Hospital pay roll as it fell into debt in 1833.²

In St. George's parish, it was the minister himself who actually opposed the new system of relief, operating independently from the General Session. William Muir, along with his session recorded that disapproval in 1821 in a letter to the provost and council. Just as Ranken was to argue in 1821 and 1830, they believed that the new system was unfair since it did not ensure that the collections of all the parishes, rich and poor, were equally distributed according to need.³ Five years later, Muir's opinion had not changed:

... the attempt to make the poor of a great city dependent on the voluntary aid of the rich, is not practicable as a general measure; and to carry it to any extent, were inhumanity to the Poor - I have seen no cause to change my opinion.⁴

Even when Muir was replaced by a personal friend of Chalmers, the situation did not change in the parish. Indeed, Patrick McFarlan described Dr. John Smyth of St. George's as being "quite unsound in his sentiments" as regards poor relief.⁵ St. George's started to draw from the Hospital fund in 1827.⁶

The third parish for which there is evidence of disquiet with St.

1. C.P., CHA 4.142.51, 7 April 1830, P. McFarlan to T. Chalmers.

2. G.T.H.M., 19 February 1833.

3. S.R.O., CH 2/818.4, St. George's KSR, 5 February 1821.

4. Ibid., 7 February 1826.

5. C.P., CHA 4.142.51, 7 April 1830, P. McFarlan to T. Chalmers. John Smyth was a life-long friend of Chalmers. A convinced Evangelical he followed Chalmers into the Free Church in 1843. He even named his second daughter Helen Chalmers Smyth: C.P., CHA 4.99.28, 15 February 1828, J. Smyth to T. Chalmers.

6. G.T.H.M., 30 August, 15 and 27 November 1827.

John's was the Outer High. On 26 November 1823, the St. John's deacon Campbell Naismith wrote to Chalmers to inform him that a teacher from the Outer High parish, one John Byers (1789-1861), had "maliciously" spread the rumour that John Bell, in Naismith's proportion, "was in great distress and quite neglected". Apparently an anonymous letter had also been sent to some "influential townsmen" - Dennistoun, Parker, Dalglish and Ewing - asking them to interfere. Two Outer High elders visited Bell and asked Naismith for an explanation. Naismith wrote to Chalmers:

I would not have mentioned this subject, but to show you how soon they try to take advantage of your absence, and whatever some of the Session may think, the Gent. in question, declared themselves decidedly hostile to the system you have set up, but I trust though not convinced, they have got enough to teach them henceforth to mind their own affairs.¹

The Outer High ended their independent management of their poor in 1825.²

Interestingly, one of the parishes in the bottom five actually attempted to stop drawing from the Hospital assessment fund at the end of the 1820's. On the available evidence, this appears to be the only parish that did so out of any real commitment to Chalmers' theories. The parish in question was St. Enoch's, where of course Chalmers' successor in St. John's had moved to in 1826.³ Towards the end of 1829 McFarlan prepared his parish to copy St. John's "in all essential points", and in April 1830 he reported that it was "working well".⁴ The attempt was short lived, however. By August 1832 the

1. C.P., CHA 4.28.15, 26 November 1823, C. Naismith to T. Chalmers.

2. G.T.H.M., 23 February 1826.

3. See above, p. 197.

4. C.P., CHA 4.142.51 and CHA 4.142.53, 7 and 20 April 1830, P. McFarlan to T. Chalmers.

parish of St. Enoch's was once more in debt and drawing from the Hospital fund.¹ It is a great pity that session records for this parish have not survived, nor any other written account of this perhaps the most genuine attempt in Glasgow to copy St. John's.

There are some indications that Chalmers' general approach to the problems of ministering to a large city parish was more successful in Glasgow than his poor relief theories. For example, in the College parish, which never attempted to be self-sufficient in its relief system, deacons were appointed in 1830 to help the elders with their poor relief work. Deacons were also appointed in St. David's parish in the 1830's under its new minister, a former student of Chalmers'.² So, in St. Mungo's, Chalmers' locality principle was applied to the parish sabbath schools - each teacher being allocated a district which he or she was to visit and encourage parents to send their children to the school under their care.³ In 1825 St. George's session agreed to appoint deacons to serve the poor in the chapel area of St. George's-in-the-Fields, and the next year also elected deacons for the parish itself.⁴ Like St. John's, the St. George's session records bore witness to a group of elders committed to the spiritual welfare of their parishioners, and concerned enough to fund three

1. G.T.H.M., 21 August 1832.

2. College KSR, 27 July 1830. St. Paul's parish also had deacons: P.P. Sess. 1844 (557), vol. 20, p. 441. This movement towards having deacons as well as elders was growing throughout Scotland. It was encouraged by other ministers than just Chalmers. For example, J.G. Lorimer, The Deaconship: A Treatise on the Office of Deacon (Edinburgh, 1842), p.93. Also see below, pp. 338-9. Lorimer became minister of St. David's, Glasgow in 1832. He was a student of Chalmers in St. Andrews.

3. S.R.O., Ch 2/550.5, St. Mungo's KSR, 4 May 1837.

4. S.R.O., CH2/818.4, St. George's KSR, 20 October 1825, and 25 July 1826.

parish missionaries in 1832.¹ By the time of the Disruption, the parish had four established churches within its confines: St. George's, St. George's-in-the-Fields, St. Peter's and Brownfield. Another parallel with St. John's was the financial drain on the parish of this provision of extra places of worship. St. George's-in-the-Fields was located in a poorer section of the parish, and was unable to meet its poor relief expenditure from its collection. Indeed, it could not even repay the interest on the loan from its managers who had subscribed to build it. By March 1832, its total debt was £1,310.² However, as a chapel it could not approach the Hospital directly to alleviate its poor relief burden, but had to go through the St. George's session. The latter tried to help out of its own collections, but in time these too were exhausted and, as has been seen, ultimately the session had to approach the Hospital and return to the centralised relief system.

On the whole, therefore, it would be accurate to conclude that Chalmers' St. John's system had little permanent effect on the individual Glasgow sessions in the sense of them wholeheartedly or indeed successfully copying it. Its inauguration had led to a shake-up in the administrative structure of relief in the city, but in the long run the effect of this was to increasingly "secularise" its poor relief system by making the individual kirk sessions one by one dependent on the Hospital funds to meet their parochial relief bills, and as a condition of that aid being subject to scrutinies of their internal relief and its administration by paid

1. Ibid., CH 2/818.5, 30 April 1832. This evangelical commitment generally in the city is borne out by the fact that seven of the ten parish ministers joined the Free Church in 1843: S.R.O., CH 2/171.7, Glasgow Presbytery Records, 1 and 28 June 1843.

2. Ibid., CH2/818.4, St. George's-in-the-Fields Chapel Minutes, 5 March 1833.

Hospital officials. In all probability, had the General Session continued in its poor relief role, something similar would have happened, since as has already been pointed out the General Session, even with all the collections at its disposal, had to seek help from the Hospital.¹ Chalmers and St. John's had not improved that situation, however, and by making each session independent had unwittingly left them more vulnerable as each was left in turn to the Hospital. By the end of the 1830's when all the parishes including St. John's were receiving most of their relief from the Hospital, the established church's role in poor relief in Glasgow was minimal.

The Church of Scotland's role in the administration of Glasgow's relief system was eroded still further in 1841. Since all the parish church collections were declining, each of those churches was asked to pay a proportion of their collections directly to the Town's Hospital. The individual kirk sessions were free to spend the remainder on their parochial and sabbath schools, but not on poor relief. For their monthly poor relief bill they had to apply to the Hospital direct. Those of their pensioners needing more than 6/- a month were sent to the Hospital as before. The church's role in the control of poor relief policy and administration in Glasgow was indeed becoming negligible. It was certainly a far cry from Chalmers' confident prediction in 1822 that the result of his scheme being copied in Glasgow would be the "official annihilation" of the Hospital.²

1. See above, pp. 122-6.

2. P.P. Sess. 1844 (557), vol. 20, Evidence of W. Brown, p. 444; T. Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 3, C.W., vol. 16, p. 195.

Certain aspects of Chalmers' theories, if not his practice, did reinforce the official attitude to relief in Glasgow.¹ For example, in 1841 the Hospital minutes were still attributing the general increase in applications for aid to the debilitating effects of the system of relief itself:

... for so soon as the acceptance of a charitable donation has assailed the principle of self-dependence, the transition is easy to regular pauperism.²

What Chalmers had underestimated, however, was that despite such beliefs there existed a fatalistic attitude to the situation that needed more than any limited success he was able to point to in St. John's in order to be overcome. This attitude accepted, albeit gloomily, that although an assessment system bred pauperism it was nonetheless inevitable in large cities, simply due to the sheer size of the problem.

The evidence of ever-increasing pauper numbers and the bill for their relief reinforced this view in Glasgow. In 1838 the Town Hospital appointed a committee to investigate the reasons for the increase. It reported that the number of sessional poor from the seven parishes which in 1830 had their collection income supplemented by the Hospital had risen by 302 by 1837. The report went on to add that the bulk of those sessional poor were old women with a little work but needing help "to eke out the scanty produce of their industry". The situation of such women had been made worse recently by periods of total unemployment which they argued permanently increased the numbers applying for aid since like Chalmers they

1. See above, pp. 50-7.

2. G.T.H.M., 16 February 1841.

believed that such relief was:

... attended by the natural result observable, in such cases, that even a short dependence on parochial assistance is sure to constitute a permanent pauper, although the original causes of such applications should not continue.¹

They did admit, however, that increased mechanisation in the form of winding machines and power-looms had also played its part in intensifying the problem.

There is evidence for a more sympathetic attitude to the question of pauperism as the 1830's closed. William Thomson junior was appointed Inspector of Sessional Poor in 1838. This was yet another bid on the part of the Hospital to keep some sort of rein on the growing poor relief burden. Thomson's job was to scrutinise all the sessional cases in the city. Although he had no say in the final judgements of the kirk sessions over their decision in individual cases, this was yet another example of the erosion by the Glasgow secular authorities of the control of relief by the church. Thomson was given an annual salary of £150 for his services.² His yearly reports give the first major indication of the connection between disease and pauperism, as opposed to concentrating solely on the links with immorality. In his first report in August 1839 this link, that W.P. Alison in Edinburgh was disputing with Chalmers,³ was clearly stated in Thomson's description of the causes of typhus, fevers and rheumatism:

1. G.T.H.M., 20 November 1838.

2. Ibid., 20 November 1838, 19 February and 20 August 1839.

3. See below, p. 344-5.

That regular Manufactories of Pauperism exist in the damp and unventilated cellars, and the ground floors in the lanes and closes of the City is a fact of easy demonstration.¹

Yet even here it was emphasised that want of work alone gave no valid or automatic right to relief. Thomson rebuked some of the sessions and wrote that:

... too much weight is often given to the plea of want of work when the pauper is able-bodied, ... by yielding to a principle not recognised by the law of Scotland, we are gradually bringing down upon us the evils of which England has been endeavouring to free herself.²

Even if the existence of any legal right of relief on the part of the able-bodied unemployed was still being fiercely opposed, a growing number of observers were increasingly appalled by the poor living conditions in Glasgow. In 1839 a Glasgow physician, Dr. Cumin, was cited in a Factory Inspectors report:

'The indigence of the labouring classes in Glasgow is much greater than the rest of the community are aware of - a very small interval indeed separates them from complete destitution, which is immediately produced by the sickness of the head of the family, or his want of employment.'³

In his evidence before the Poor Law Commission, Glasgow's Superintendent of Police, Captain Miller, related his observations of the city's poor. He believed in the strong links between immorality, pauperism and also crime, but he acknowledged the great detrimental effects on all of these of dreadful living conditions in the centre of the city:

The houses in which they live are altogether unfit for human beings, and every apartment is filled with a promiscuous crowd of men, women and children, in a state of filth and misery. In many of the houses there is scarcely any ventilation. Dunghills lie

1. G.T.H.M., 20 August 1839.

2. Ibid.

3. PP. Sess. 1839 (155) and (281), vol. 19, p. 71.

in the vicinity of the dwellings, and from the extremely defective sewerage, filth of every kind constantly accumulates.¹

The growing interest in statistics, remarked on previously in relation to James Cleland's work, reinforced this picture of a concentrated mass of filth, poverty, disease, crime and drink in Glasgow's heartland. The work of Cowan and Watt revealed some shocking figures.² It was the fact that such figures revealed that the situation was worsening that lent an air of desperation to the problem. The mortality rate of children under five had increased from 70 per thousand in 1821 to 112 per thousand in 1841. Likewise, that of the entire population had grown from 1:41 to 1:24.³

Against such a background as this it can be understood why Chalmers' plans for poor relief were having little impact by the end of the 1830's. The St. John's experiment, for all Chalmers' claims for its success, simply had not been convincing. This chapter has shown that those claims in themselves were largely ill-founded, and that the experiment had little positive impact on the other Glasgow parishes. It now remains to be seen how the rest of Scotland reacted to Chalmers' theories on poor relief, especially bearing in mind that in St. Andrews and Edinburgh in his capacity as a Professor of Moral Philosophy and Divinity he was in a position to influence the next generation of parish ministers.

1. P.P., Sess. 1844 (557), vol. 20, Evidence of Captain Miller, 12 April 1843, p. 323.

2. R. Cowan, Vital Statistics of Glasgow (Glasgow, 1838), p. 46; A. Watt, The Glasgow Bills of Mortality for 1841 and 1842 (Glasgow, 1844), p. 95; Watt was the city statistician and secretary of the Statistical Section of the Glasgow Philosophical Society.

3. A. Gibb, op. cit., pp. 109-10.

CHAPTER SEVEN: The Impact of Chalmers' Poor Relief
Theories on Scotland.

"... young men who sit at your feet venerate their beloved Prophet too much not to imbibe his spirit."¹

The impact of Chalmers' poor relief theories was not confined to the west of Scotland. As with anyone in an influential position who has a deep commitment to certain principles, Chalmers was keen to use his position to further their adoption throughout Scotland and indeed further abroad. In his printed works, Chalmers had repeatedly called for other parishes to copy the St. John's experiment by starting a retracing process from whatever point they were at within the corrupt assessment system. In furthering that cause he utilised several methods of propaganda. For example, he had a network of influential friends among the landed classes who, as heritors, and in some cases also as patrons of Scottish parishes had some say in the administration of poor relief. In addition, by the time he left St. John's he had printed a number of descriptions of his theories and experiment in poor relief, and his Christian and Civic Economy was nearly complete.²

As these were widely read and their contents disseminated, their potential influence on ministers and laymen of Chalmers' own and succeeding generations was great.³ Another obvious source of influence in Scotland was Chalmers' impact on the students

1. C.P., CHA 4.298.68, 9 October 1841, N. Grierson to T. Chalmers.

2. T. Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy of Large Towns, vol. 1 (Glasgow, 1821); A Speech Delivered on the 24th of May 1822, before the General Assembly ... explanatory of the measures which have been successfully pursued in St. John's Parish, Glasgow (Glasgow, 1822); The Christian and Civic Economy of Large Towns, vol. 2 (Glasgow, 1823); Statement in regard to the Pauperism of Glasgow, from the Experience of the Last Eight Years (Glasgow, 1823).

3. Brown, Chalmers, p. 146.

he taught and came in contact with once he had moved to a university environment.

Before proceeding to analyse these persuasive tactics used by Chalmers, there is another method of implementing theories that must be considered. That is, he could have agitated for parliamentary legislation to establish a network of small parishes across Scotland and compelling them to administer a poor relief system based on the voluntary church offerings as opposed to an assessment. Throughout his life Chalmers was intent on promoting a philosophy of voluntary acceptance and experimentation of his St. John's scheme, with the vehicle of parliamentary legislation only being used to ensure this might take place smoothly, particularly in areas such as England where it was more difficult to implement.¹ In the early 1820's, however, he did have one brief contact with an attempt to procure more drastic poor relief legislation through the medium of a private member's bill proposed by Thomas Francis Kennedy of Dunure (1788-1879).²

Kennedy had been educated at Edinburgh University and, like Chalmers, attended Dugald Stewart's lectures. From 1818 to 1834 he was the M.P. for the Ayr burghs. As a Whig, he was friendly with Cockburn and Jeffrey, and shared their interest in the reform of Scotland's institutions and political system. He was also friendly with another leading Whig of the day, Gilbert Elliot, second earl of Minto (1782-1859), whose family seat was in Roxburghshire in the borders. Minto was concerned about improving the moral and physical condition of the labouring classes, and was involved in the promotion

1. See below, pp. 356-379.

2. Brown, Chalmers, pp. 154-62.

of Henry Duncan's parochial savings bank idea.¹ As a leading heritor in the borders, he was also worried by the growing poor relief bills for the area, an increasing amount of which was being raised by assessments, which in turn were being blamed for producing more pauperism.²

Kennedy's concern about poor relief pre-dated Chalmers' work in the field.³ He helped to gather information for the 1818 General Assembly report on poor relief, and in the following year he introduced a bill in parliament to prevent individual paupers in Scotland appealing above the kirk session and heritors to the civil courts against poor relief decisions.⁴ In the early 1820's he joined forces with Chalmers and in 1824 introduced a bill to effect the 1819 aim and to allow the heritors and magistrates of Scottish parishes and towns to drop the assessment system for all new paupers.

When first approached in 1823 about Kennedy's proposed bill Chalmers was reluctant to espouse it. It was Minto who finally persuaded him that it would facilitate the widespread multiplication⁵ of the St. John's system throughout Scotland. However, it soon

1. See above, p. 17; N.L.S. Minto papers, MS. 12122.97, Regulations for Hawick savings bank; 103, Opening of Kelso parish savings bank, 7 November 1814; 104, Rules for Ruthwell parish savings bank (instituted on 26 May 1810); 112, Henry Duncan's Essay on Savings Banks, 1815; 30, 17 February, the Rev. R. Lundie to Minto: 23, 22 April 1819, H. Duncan to Minto.

2. P.P. Sess. 1818 (358), vol. 5, Third report from the Select Committee on the Poor Laws (1818): with an Appendix Containing Returns from the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, pp. 29-30: all the parishes in the synod of Merse and Teviotdale were assessed, and a growing number in Dumfries.

3. N.L.S., Minto Papers, MS. 12122.12, 18 August 1815, T. F. Kennedy to Minto.

4. P.P. Sess. 1819 (180), vol. I.B., A Bill to regulate the Relief Granted to the Poor in Scotland, pp. 1-2.

5. N.L.S., Minto Papers, MS. 12122.55, 27 January 1824, T. Chalmers to Minto.

became apparent that the bill had very little support within Scotland. Cockburn argued that this was because it was not understood, and that people were terrified it would result in magistrates and landowners simply abdicating their responsibilities and abandoning the poor to the already overstretched resources of the kirk sessions.¹ Chalmers' Evangelical friends, particularly Henry Duncan, helped him out of the potential folly of supporting the bill by engineering a face-saving debate in the General Assembly of 1824, the natural conclusion of which was Chalmers supporting Duncan's motion against the proposed bill.² Thereafter, Chalmers reverted to a dual approach of encouraging parishes to adopt voluntarily his poor relief system, but arguing for more legal protection for such parishes against claimants whom they refused to relieve.³

Despite the unanimous endorsement by the 1825 General Assembly of the motion against Kennedy's bill, support in Scotland for Chalmers' poor relief theories was by no means annihilated, neither among the general public nor throughout the ministry. Rather, the affair was an indication to Chalmers that his persuasive tactics would be more effective. Brown points to Chalmers' speech in the 1824 Assembly including a call to parishes to follow his poor relief parochial plans

1. H. Cockburn, "Statement in regard to the Pauperism of Glasgow, from the Experience of the Last Eight Years, By T. Chalmers. D.D. 1823", The Edinburgh Review, vol. 41 (1824-5), no. 81, article 11, pp. 228-58.

2. S.R.O., CH1/1/79, General Assembly Acts, 1821-4 (Edinburgh, 1824), Session 6, 26 May 1824, p. 479; Edinburgh Christian Instructor, vol. xxiii, pp. 477-82. To be fair to Chalmers, as late as February 1824 he was still expressing doubts about the bill: N.L.S., Minto Papers, MS. 12122.62, 9 February 1824, T. Chalmers to Minto. Minto and Kennedy did have to persuade him: H. Cockburn, Letters on the Affairs of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1874), pp. 102-3.

3. T. Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 3, C.W. vol. 16, Appendix 3, pp. 351-3; see above, pp. 268-9.

voluntarily, but cites only four parishes that ever did so: Ancrum, Langholm, Ruthwell and Dirleton. In fact there were many more attempts than these to implement Chalmers' ideas on poor relief. Although Brown points to Chalmers' concentration switching to education and the Evangelical cause in the later 1820's, he seriously underestimates the power of Chalmers' persuasive tactics in the area of poor relief, through the medium of the printed word, the backing of his influential friends, and his impression on students.

Among many leading Scottish writers and theorists on poor relief in the 1820's and 1830's, and indeed beyond, Chalmers was acknowledged as an authority on the subject. Cockburn's article in 1825 in support of Chalmers' views has already been referred to. Throughout his life Cockburn was to continue to believe in the "wisdom and energy of his system for the management of the poor", and to hold it up as a model against the assessment system.¹ The other leading Scottish Whig advocate, Francis Jeffrey (1773-1850) also encouraged Chalmers' early writings on pauperism in the Edinburgh Review, and was particularly struck by his plans for parochial education.²

Alexander Henry Dunlop (1798-1870), an Evangelical church lawyer and politician, wrote A Treatise on the Law of Scotland Relative to the Poor in 1825. He sent a copy to Chalmers and wrote to him of his:

... sincere conviction of the efficacy of your plans to diminish the miseries of pauperism and promote the general happiness of mankind.³

1. H. Cockburn, Memorials (Edinburgh, 1909), pp. 390-393; H. Cockburn, Journal, 1831-51 (2 vols, Edinburgh, 1874), vol. 2, pp. 1-5, 119-120.

2. C.P., CHA 4.6.21, 25 July 1817, 4.12.1, 21 December 1819, F. Jeffrey to T. Chalmers; C.P., Miscellaneous, 19 October 1818, T. Chalmers to F. Jeffrey.

3. St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.240, February 1825, A. Dunlop to T. Chalmers.

In his treatise, Dunlop cited Chalmers' writings on poor relief and supported his emphasis on the need for religious and secular education to provide preventive checks on the population and reduce pauperism. The pure Scottish system was "as nearly perfect as any system of legal provision can be", especially since it gave no legal right to relief to the able-bodied unemployed, and encouraged neighbours and relatives to relieve the poor.¹ Dunlop's interest in Chalmers' scheme to combat pauperism endured into the 1830's, and he also supported Chalmers' idea of initiating his poor relief system into the new churches and parishes built in the course of the church extension campaign.²

The two leading statistical surveyors of Scottish society in the early nineteenth century also lent their voice to Chalmers' call to action. James Cleland's support has already been referred to, and he never tired of describing the St. John's experiment and its undoubted success.³ Sir John Sinclair (1754-1835) was the motivating force behind the Statistical Account of Scotland compiled in the 1790's. He was very friendly with Chalmers, and backed up his arguments on poor relief, the role of the Christian minister, and parochial education, both in his letters to Chalmers and in his Analysis of the Statistitcal Account in 1826.⁴

1. A. Dunlop, A Treatise on the Law of Scotland Relative to the Poor (Edinburgh, 1825), pp. 22-3, 28-33.

2. For example, C.P., CHA 4.249.58, 22 December 1836, A. Dunlop to T. Chalmers.

3. See above, pp. 113, 159; J. Cleland, The Rise and Progress of the City of Glasgow (Glasgow, 1829), pp. 154-5.

4. C.P., CHA 4.13.38, 2 October 1819, 4.18.41, 28 July 1821, 4.22.45, 5 June 1822, 4.29.32, 31 December 1823, 4.38.32,34,36,38, 39, 43, 7 May, 5 June, 7 August, 1 and 13 September, 9 December 1824, 4.49.31, 33, 35, 22 July, 22 August, 15 September 1825, 4.62.11, 12, 27 and 31 May 1826, Sir J. Sinclair to T. Chalmers; Sir John Sinclair, Analysis of the Statistical Account of Scotland (London, 1826), pp. 180-91.

Among the Scottish titled gentry and nobility, the belief in Chalmers' poor relief ideas and his ideal parochial system was also very strong. Alexander, tenth duke of Hamilton (1767-1852), and Lord John Hay (1793-1851, brother of the marquis of Tweeddale and nephew of Lord Lauderdale) were both familiar with Chalmers' writings on pauperism and agreed with their conclusions. Hay offered his support if Kennedy's bill was ever re-introduced. James St. Clair-Erskine, second earl of Rosslyn (1762-1837) was also impressed by Chalmers' writings and wanted to use his patronage in Dysart parish to appoint John Thomson, who had demonstrated to Rosslyn a knowledge of "Dr. Chalmers' System of Parochial Management."¹ Indeed, Chalmers' advice was often sought by individual patrons on suitable candidates for their parishes - for example, the marquis of Lothian, the earl of Minto, the earl of Elgin, and the duke of Buccleuch.²

One of Chalmers' most active supporters among the nobility was the Tory peer Thomas Bruce, seventh earl of Elgin (1776-1841). Not only did Elgin support Chalmers whenever he could both in Scotland and in Government circles in London, by promoting his plans for the "extinction of pauperism", he also helped to sustain an experiment in "traditional" Scottish poor relief management in Dunfermline.³ He was a loyal friend to Chalmers. However, he vehemently opposed and tried

1. C.P., CHA 4.35.4, 31 July 1824, duke of Hamilton to T. Chalmers; 4.78.39, 30 January 1827, Lord John Hay to T. Chalmers; 4.29.12, 2 and 27 October 1823, earl of Rosslyn to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.20.1, 2, 4, 6, 30 January, 11 February, 18 and 20 March 1822, earl of Elgin to T. Chalmers; 4.144.21, 23, 1 and 8 July 1830, marquis of Lothian to T. Chalmers; 4.144.3, 17 May 1830, earl of Minto to T. Chalmers; 4.154.5, 15 December 1831, duke of Buccleuch to T. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 4.20.2, 9, 11, 25, 11 February, 13 and 19 May, 2 November 1822, 4.25.39, 40, 44, 28 March, 26 April, 27 June 1823, 4.138.16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 27, 25 January, 15 and 29 April, 4 and 5 May, 13 December 1830, earl of Elgin to T. Chalmers; and see Appendix 3, pp. 419-20.

to sever Chalmers' association with Whigs such as Cockburn and Jeffrey.¹

As had happened at a local level in St. John's, Chalmers also attracted the support of a number of wealthy female philanthropists in Scotland. Lady Grace Douglas' material help for the building of St. John's chapel has already been discussed. In addition, Augusta Ann MacKenzie (?-1856), a daughter of Francis Humberstone MacKenzie of Kintail, lent her support to Chalmers. She was introduced to him through Sir John Gladstone, and in the 1830's helped Chalmers' projects for church extension and parochial provision in Edinburgh. Another influential female supporter was Lady Agnes Murray Carnegie (1764-1860), a niece of the first earl of Minto, and a sister-in-law of James Douglas of Cavers. Lady Agnes first became acquainted with Chalmers through hearing him preach and reading his printed works. She sent him a donation for St. John's and in Ireland helped to establish a district visiting scheme, modelled on Chalmers' ideal. The main concern of all of these women was the spiritual improvement of the masses in the crowded city centres, and they were convinced by Chalmers' assertions that that was also the best way of improving their material condition.²

In addition to this strong following among leading Scottish theorists and philanthropists, there is evidence of the carrying out of some of Chalmers' ideas at a practical level. After the publication

1. C.P., CHA 4.7.50, 9 November 1818, 4.25.47, 15 October 1823, earl of Elgin to T. Chalmers.

2. See above, pp. 185-6; C.P., CHA 4.17.77, 2 August 1821, J. Gladstone to T. Chalmers; N.L.S., Mackenzie Family Correspondence, MS. 6363/27, 29 August 1834, T. Chalmers to Miss A.A. Mackenzie; C.P., CHA 4.10.33, 15 December 1819, 4.24.51, 53, 13 February, 6 March 1823, 4.53.9, 18, 21 January, 20 December 1826, Lady A.M. Carnegie to T. Chalmers; see below, p. 380.

in 1821 of his first volume of The Christian and Civic Economy, in which he had dealt with the importance of local operations within the large city parishes, a considerable amount of enthusiasm was generated for the spiritual aspects of his parochial system and attempts were made to divide parishes into districts where teams of lay visitors and sabbath teachers would concentrate their energies. For example, in Edinburgh district visiting societies were established in the 1820's in an attempt to put Chalmers' "admirable system of localising into practical operation".¹ Likewise, as has been demonstrated, several of the Glasgow parishes followed suit.²

There were also attempts to implement Chalmers' theories on poor relief management. It has already been mentioned that the borders area in particular was becoming riddled by an assessment system, and it was in the borders that Chalmers' had had his first ministerial charge as assistant in Cavers near Hawick. He maintained contact with some of the landowners of that neighbourhood such as the Douglasses of Cavers and the earl of Minto. From Chalmers' correspondence it is apparent that he used such contacts to establish a network of relationships in the area, spearheaded by such heritors as Minto, General Dirom of Mount Annan, and by several ministers: Henry Duncan in Ruthwell, his brother Thomas Tudor Duncan (1776-1858) in Dumfries, Andrew Jameson (1779-1861) in St. Mungo's, Castlemilk, and William

1. C.P., CHA 4.23.1, 31 January 1821, W. Tait to T. Chalmers; 4.110.12, n.d., A. McGregor to T. Chalmers; 4.18.15, 16 March 1821, D.M. McGregor to T. Chalmers (D.M. McGregor was the brother of Alexander McGregor, a deacon in St. John's, and stayed in Edinburgh. With Alexander's encouragements, he helped to introduce Chalmers' principles of locality in Edinburgh); 4.18.2, 15 February 1821, E. Irving to T. Chalmers; 4.85.15, 18 April 1827, W. Sime to T. Chalmers, 4.85.2, 23 May 1827, J.T. Smith to T. Chalmers; 4.85.41, 18 October 1827, R. Stewart to T. Chalmers.

2. See above, pp. 306-7.

Berry Shaw (1774-1856) in Langholm. Building on a pre-existing agreement with Chalmers' analysis of the Scottish voluntary system of relief, and an acceptance of Chalmers' methods of conducting parishes back to such a system, these members of Chalmers' own generation initiated five definite attempts to implement the St. John's experiment in borders parishes. Two of these experiments - in Annan and Ancrum - came to nothing due to the opposition of the heritors in Annan, and the minister in Ancrum, despite decided efforts by Minto and Shaw to convince the latter. The other three attempts took place in Dumfries, St. Mungo's and Langholm. Moreover, there were references to another landowner, Lord Napier in Ettrick, attempting such an experiment in that parish, although there is little concrete evidence to support this.¹ True, there was also some opposition in the borders to Chalmers' poor relief ideas, but in the 1820's at least it appears to have been minimal.²

In the three borders parishes which were more successful in their attempts to consolidate a voluntary relief system, the ministers concerned were all contemporaries of Chalmers, became friendly with him over the years, had read his writings on poor relief, and wrote to him for advice about their experiments. Jameson's work in St. Mungo's in fact pre-dated Chalmers' St. John's experiment. The parish was a small agricultural one with a population well below 1,000, and at the beginning of the nineteenth century was still without an assessment. Having suffered some strain on its relief funds as a result of the

1. For Ancrum and Annan see Appendix 3, pp. 431-3; for the references to Napier's experiment see P.P. Sess. 1834 (Appendix A, Part II), vol. 29, Report from His Majesty's Commissioners for inquiring into the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws, pp. 219a, 228a, where P.F. Johnston, an assistant Commissioner, claimed Napier was successful in reducing the assessments.

2. R. Wilson, A Sketch of the History of Hawick (Hawick, 1825), pp. 301 ff.

famine at that time, Jameson began a campaign in 1803 to ensure that this voluntary system should continue and to prevent it following other borders parishes into an assessment. Sir John Maxwell of Springhill in the parish of Gretna was so impressed by Jameson's work that he tried, unsuccessfully, to obtain that living for him in order to provide him with a "more extensive field" for his system.¹ Of the three ministers, Shaw in Langholm parish knew Chalmers best. He ran an experiment to try and retrace his parish's steps back from an assessment to Chalmers' description of the 'Scottish' voluntary scheme of church - offerings. His work in this field ran from 1822 to 1830. Duncan's work in Dumfries, the largest of the three parishes, was the most short-lived, lasting only from 1830-1832. The incidence of pauperism in that town proved too great to be alleviated by this brief trial of some of Chalmers' principles, but this attempt was also inspired by Chalmers' followers. All three of these experiments finally failed - even the small parish of St. Mungo's had to adopt a compulsory assessment in 1842. However, a determined effort to put Chalmers' ideas into practice had been made.²

The evidence for support of Chalmers' theories at a parochial and practical level is more random geographically for the rest of Scotland. Eight more parishes made definite attempts to copy the St. John's experiment, or to adapt pre-existing schemes of voluntary relief to a closer approximation of Chalmers' ideal. These were: Kirriemuir (1814-1840), Dunfermline (1815-1839), the Canongate, Edinburgh (1821-1823), Dirleton (1823-1838), Kilmarnock (1827-1835), Inverness (1828-1840, 1841-1843), North Leith (1829- ?), and Dalkeith

1. C.P., CHA 4.94.22, May 1828, A. Jameson to T. Chalmers.

2. See Appendix 3 pp. 417-8, 422-3, 429-30, for a fuller description of these parishes' experiences in poor relief.

(1831-1836).¹ Leaving aside Glasgow, which has already been dealt with, the total population of these eleven parishes was approximately 87,000 in 1831, or about 4% of Scotland's population. In other words, at least one in twenty-five of all Scots living outside Glasgow experienced a St. John's style poor relief regime for some period in the 1820's and 1830's. This is by no means an insignificant number. Nor does this take into account those parishes which sought Chalmers' advice on poor relief, even if they did not themselves conduct an experiment along the lines of the St. John's one.²

It might be wondered whether such attempts to reduce and eventually abolish assessment by copying St. John's were motivated by sheer economy as opposed to any sincere conviction of the veracity of Chalmers' theories. A few of the main protagonists of these schemes, however, did record their ideas on the subject. It is apparent from these that there was a coincidence of thought with Chalmers' description of the debilitating effects of 'artificial' pauperism, and a belief in man's 'natural' ability to be economically self-sufficient. For example, Thomas Easton (1779-1856), the minister behind the voluntary relief scheme in Kirriemuir referred to the necessity of bringing pauperism back to its "natural state", and was emphatic that

1. See Appendix 3. pp. 418-21, 423-5, 426-9, 430-1.

2. M. Flinn, ed., Scottish Population History from the 17th century to the 1930s (Cambridge, 1977), p. 302, gives Scotland's population in 1831 as 2,373,561; The Third Statistical Account, vol. 5, Glasgow, p. 105, gives Glasgow's population as 202,426. Examples of parishes whose ministers sought Chalmers' advice, and which supported in theory his voluntary system were: Cromarty and Wick in the Highlands, and Burntisland in Fife: C.P., CHA 4.62.34, 3 March 1826, A. Stewart to T. Chalmers (re Cromarty); 4.37.63, 3 December 1824, R. Phin to T. Chalmers (re Wick); 4.23.26, 6 November 1822, C. Watson to T. Chalmers (re Burntisland).

if the kirk session carried out its duty properly:

... the care of the poor may with safety be left to the unforced sympathies of our nature and to the influence of religion.¹

However, he did not agree with Chalmers' arguments for his ultimate ideal of even doing away with the voluntary church collections source of relief and his belief that ultimately all official pauperism could be abolished. Easton argued that nature would always need the guiding hand of the church and its officers as they went around disbursing with discretion the small hand-outs available under the Scottish system and their example leading the ordinary people back into the natural ways of helping each other.²

William Stark (1772-1834), the minister of Dirleton also left behind an account of his poor relief scheme. Again, like Chalmers, Stark argues for the "natural" Scottish solution:

... were they not stopt by a vicious interference from another quarter, the genuine unsophisticated workings of human nature would not fail to open up.³

Thus his premises and conclusions were similar to Chalmers', but, like Easton, he did not dwell to the same extent, on the "moral philosophy" of the question.

In Kilmarnock, the motivator of the poor relief experiment was one of the elders, John Parker of Asloss. Parker was a friend of two of the St. John's agents - Robert Wodrow and Charles Naismith - and had been tutored by Chalmers' second successor in St. John's, Thomas

1. T. Easton, Statements Relative to the Pauperism of Kirriemuir, 1814-1825 (Forfar, 1825), p.vii-ix.

2. Ibid., pp. 128-35, 151.

3. W. Stark, Considerations Addressed to the Heritors and Kirk-Sessions of Scotland, particularly of the Border Counties, on Certain Questions Connected with the Administration of the Affairs of the Poor (Edinburgh, 1826), pp. 32, 70.

Brown. Through these St. John's contacts Parker was introduced to Chalmers, read his writings on poor relief, and encouraged his co-elders to attempt to introduce them into Kilmarnock. He claimed their experiment was:

... a fresh triumph of your excellent parochial system over prejudice and false principles of benevolence.¹

In Inverness a Society for the Suppression of Begging had existed since 1816 to suppress begging and relieve indigence. Its funding was by private subscriptions, but as the amount of poverty in the town grew its funds became inadequate. A public meeting was called in 1827 to decide whether to adopt a legal assessment for the parish, or to persevere with private charity. At this meeting a sub-committee was appointed to investigate the various methods of relief used throughout Scotland and to report back on any that might prove suitable for Inverness. There were three members of this sub-committee - George Cameron, (a lawyer and an insurance agent), Alexander McTavish and James MacKenzie. In the process of their research they read Chalmers' Christian and Civic Economy, and were particularly struck by the description of St. John's in the second volume. In their report they cited this and referred to:

... the feelings of charity and benevolence, implanted by nature in our constitution, and by the precepts and spirit of our religion.²

Cameron also contacted Chalmers directly about the Inverness situation. He told Chalmers that his account of St. John's had swayed them away from considering public voluntary contributions, in

1. C.P., CHA 4.126.42, 4 September 1829, J. Parker to T. Chalmers.

2. Report of the Sub-Committee of the Inverness Society for the Suppression of Begging (Inverness, 1828), p. 5.

agreement with Chalmers' opposition to the demoralising effect of a large central fund. They were convinced that the poor should be left to the most "natural" method, "the superintendence of our ecclesiastical police", that is, the church, and the charity and benevolence of neighbours.¹

The Inverness Society accepted the recommendations of Cameron and his associates, and decided both to dissolve itself, and to encourage the kirk session to assume complete control of poor relief in the parish church using the church door collections and a body of agents to encourage the poor to help themselves. Chalmers' written works had definitely triggered this experiment off. It lasted until 1840, when the session avowed that it could no longer continue. The heritors and magistrates, however, still tried to keep the voluntary system going, and did not finally abandon it until 1843. By the end of the Inverness story, there is a definite element of parsimony about the intentions of the secular administrators, but the original intentions behind the scheme come across as a genuine conviction of the truth of Chalmers' theories.²

As had happened in the borders, all of the other eight attempts to enact Chalmers' poor relief theories eventually collapsed. Nonetheless, they reveal a surprisingly large body of support at a local level in Scotland, convinced that Chalmers' ideas on the relief of poverty established or confirmed their own views, and willing to implement and adapt his practical proposals for reform. There was not

1. C.P., CHA 4.90.1, 3, 8 March, 29 April 1828, G. Cameron to T. Chalmers.

2. Report of the Sub-Committee of the Inverness Society, pp. 15-16, 25, 28-9, 31-7; S.R.O., CH2/720.14, KSR Inverness, 5 and 12 May, 1 July, 2 August 1828, 27 January 1829, 1 June, 6 July 1830, 9 March 1832, 14 July 1833, 9 November 1837, 19 January 1840, 1 March, 17 July, 2 and 12 August 1841, 13 January, 10 March, 16 May, 6 and 14 July, 3 August 1842, 13 April, 31 May, 13 July 1843.

unanimity of opinion among them. As has been seen, Easton was against Chalmers' ultimate ideal of no public relief system at all, even a limited one based on church door collections. Yet this group was homogeneous enough to consider themselves followers of Chalmers and to be unafraid of citing him as their inspiration. Although there was also a group of ministers opposed to Chalmers' anti-assessment stance (most notably Macgill in Glasgow, Burns and Patrick Brewster in Paisley, and Andrew Thomson in Edinburgh), the pro-Chalmers faction was an impressive one.¹ Their existence in part explains why it was to take a considerable time before such ingrained attitudes to the ignominy of state relief could even begin to be broken down in Scotland.

All of the above experiments in poor relief were carried out by men who were by and large Chalmers' contemporaries. His writings and ideas on poor relief also has an impact, however, on the succeeding generation of ministers and city missionaries. Chalmers was in direct contact with some of the emerging group of pastors through his teaching positions in St. Andrews and Edinburgh, where he moved as Professor of Divinity in 1828. Indeed, it will be remembered that it was this potential for influencing succeeding generations of ministers that had contributed to his accepting the position in St Andrews and leaving his pastoral charge of St. John's.² In the context of this thesis it is important to analyse what exactly Chalmers was teaching these young students and whether there is any evidence of his ideas on poor relief influencing them.

1. See above, pp. 21, 23-5, and below, p. 346, footnote 1, Brown, Chalmers, p. 124.

2. See above, pp. 189-90; N.L.S., Paul Papers, MS. 5139/113, 23 October 1824, T. Chalmers to R. Paul.

In St. Andrews Chalmers taught moral philosophy - a course which arts students normally studied in their third year. During his second session, 1824-5, he also introduced a separate class in political economy. This subject had been taught before in St. Andrews by William Crawford in 1818-19, but not as an individual class.¹ Chalmers' lectures on moral philosophy concentrated on Christian ethics. He ensured that a Christian interpretation was brought to bear upon all aspects of morality, arguing from the premise that all men were born with an innate moral sense, a conscience implanted by God.² This innate moral sense had also played a key role in his theorising on poor relief.³ In his political economy class, Chalmers considered the social issues of the day and the ministers' role in coping with them. Between the two classes of moral philosophy and political economy he had a respectable number of students between 1825 and 1828: 1825-6, 65 and 35 respectively; 1826-7, 55 and 29; and 1827-8, 64 and 29. Over those years, 74 out of the 95 political economy students also took moral philosophy.⁴

Chalmers used Smith's Wealth of Nations as a textbook for his political economy course and set essays on such topics as the division of labour, rent, land ownership, combinations, wages, trade, prices

1. J.M. Anderson, The Matriculation Roll of the University of St Andrews, 1747-1897 (Edinburgh, 1905), pp. xxv, xxxi.

2. T. Chalmers, Sketches of Moral and Mental Philosophy, C.W., vol. 5, pp. 205, 362 (hereafter Sketches).

3. See above, pp. 97, 131.

4. C.P., CHA 6.14.1,2,3,4, Moral Philosophy Class Notebooks; in St. Andrews Chalmers also made a considerable impact on students outside the classroom: he encouraged the growth of missionary societies, local sabbath schools run by the students, and meetings for prayer and fellowship. In this way, he helped to make St. Andrews an attractive centre for evangelical students, and in 1824-5, the university recorded its highest number of students for the period, 343 - Anderson, op. cit., p. xlv; Hanna, Memoirs, 3, p. 189f.; Brown, Chalmers, p. 118; C.P., CHA 6.14.1,2,3,4, Moral Philosophy Class Notebooks.

and free trade. Another essay subject was the issue of pauperism, and Chalmers linked his two courses by suggesting as a topic for a voluntary essay in moral philosophy in the 1827-8 session: 'On Pauperism and the Method of conducting back a Parish from assessments to a system of gratuitous relief.'¹ It is obvious that he was indeed using the classroom to propound his theories to the next generation of ministers.

Chalmers later published his moral philosophy lectures from St. Andrews, thus increasing their potential impact on an even wider audience. In them, he reiterated his earlier reasoning on the operation of man's sympathy in providing an automatic and safe response to need:

The effect of suffering to call forth sympathy, and the effect of sympathy back again to act as an emollient upon suffering, is one of those established processes in the economy of nature, by which the ills of humanity are alleviated.²

In relation to this reasoning and its connections with his poor relief ideas, it is interesting that in his discussion of gratitude Chalmers argued that it was a feeling aroused not by the object given but by the thing that prompted the giver's heart. He deduced from this that there were occasions when a person might be glad of the gift, but not grateful to the giver if the latter had not acted out of a kind regard for the person himself. For example, the benefactor might have acted to show of his own wealth, or his action might have been:

... extorted by the voice of neighbourhood, that called for some decent and neighbourlike contribution ...³

It is interesting that Chalmers recognised the potential pressure a

1. C.P., CHA 6.14.1,2,3,4, Moral Philosophy Class Notebooks.
2. T. Chalmers, Sketches, p. 202.
3. Ibid., p. 351.

community might exert over the individual. Of course, for St. John's he always asserted that the removal of all official relief made neighbourly charity spontaneous, but he gave very little proof that that was in fact the case, nor did he demonstrate that pressure from the deacons and elders on friends, relatives and neighbours never produced "extorted" charity of the type he had recognised here.

When Chalmers moved on to Edinburgh University in 1828-9 as Professor of Divinity he continued to imbue his students with his views on church ministry and its impact on such social issues as pauperism and education. In addition, he encouraged students to work among the poor of Edinburgh and attempt to evangelise them. Once more, his lectures were published, and so made available to other ministers and laymen. Indeed, he gave one separate lecture each week:

... preparatory to our views on the treatment of pauperism, and other questions in parish economics, which enter largely into the duties and attention of the pastoral care.¹

He also reaffirmed his belief that it was churchmen and their understanding of political economy that held the key to Scotland's well-being, since ministers:

If sufficiently enlightened on the question of pauperism, they might, with the greatest ease, in Scotland, clear away this moral leprosy from their respective parishes. And, standing at the head of the Christian education, they are the lone effectual dispensers of all those civil and economical blessings which would follow in its train.²

In these Edinburgh lectures in the 1830's, Chalmers repeated his vehement arguments against a compulsory provision for the indigent,

1. T. Chalmers, On Political Economy, in connexion with the Moral State and Moral Prospects of Society, C.W., vols. 19, 20 (hereafter On Political Economy), vol. 19, p. xv; C.P., CHA 4.181.6, 10 August 1832, R.K. Hamilton to T. Chalmers.

2. Chalmers, On Political Economy, vol. 19, p. xv; Ibid., vol. 20, pp. 10, 41.

although in favour of one for disease and education.¹ Interestingly, he continued to state that the conversion of all to Christianity was not necessary for his ideal of a pauper-free society to exist. If communities were led by their ministers into a free natural state of parochial economy, with no "artificial" compulsory poor relief provision, then that would be enough to rid the nation of pauperism. The established church was the best vehicle available to effect this situation and so bring about an economic amelioration of the people, although if people were also attracted into the church in the process then the whole operation would be made easier. Mass conversion, however, was not a prerequisite for social reforms.²

At the same time, however, Chalmers' ideas on poor relief and his solution for pauperism were not remaining static within his overall perspective. Rather, they developed alongside the issues concerning the Church of Scotland as a whole at the time. As the 1830's progressed, the latter became consumed by what the growing Evangelical party within it considered to be threats to its spiritual independence and its credibility as a national church. After Chalmers' move to Edinburgh in 1828 as Professor of Divinity, his stature as a spokesman for the Evangelicals grew steadily. The death of Andrew Thomson in 1831 reinforced this trend. The combination of these factors focused Chalmers' attention increasingly on the lack of church accommodation and the growing conflict over the question of patronage and the church's authority. As the champion of church extension in particular, Chalmers continued to have many followers in his old

1. *Ibid.*, vol. 19, pp. 400-410, 414-19.

2. *Ibid.*, vol. 20, pp. 12-20. One of Chalmers' St. Andrews students, George Lewis, was to echo this in 1841, see below, p. 338.

parish of St. John's and in Glasgow generally, some of whom indeed initiated the new look local church extension programmes of the 1830's.¹ He remained steadfast in his argument from his St. John's days that the provision of churches was linked to morality and social conditions in the land, but the urgent priority in the mid-1830's was to physically provide the necessary churches and to fill them with suitable pastors.²

At the beginning of his serious theorising on poor relief in the Edinburgh Review articles of 1817 and 1818, Chalmers' solution had been two-fold: both an extension of church provision by multiplying parishes, especially in large towns, and the use of ecclesiastical officers of this extended church to return the people by secular and religious education to their natural instinctive sympathy with their fellow men.³ This was his full "parochial system". The 1830's however, witnessed the division of this two-pronged attack, as emphasis generally among the Evangelicals concentrated on reclaiming the growing spiritual wastelands in the towns. Although Chalmers still urged that his poor relief system be implemented, he willingly incorporated the pressure to concentrate primarily on providing churches and parishes for the increasingly large section of the population "in a state little short of heathenism".⁴ In 1834 he

1. See above, pp. 237-8: Brown, Chalmers, p. 236; W. Collins, Proposal for Building Twenty New Parochial Churches in the City and Suburbs of Glasgow (Glasgow, 1834); in St. John's parish itself, a new church called Chalmers' Church was opened in 1838.

2. Brown, Chalmers, pp. 235-256.

3. See above, pp. 91-8; T. Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 1, C.W., vol. 14, pp. 140-1.

4. N.L.S., Clerk of Penicuik MSS., GD 18/411/1, 17 December 1834, T. Chalmers to Sir George Clerk.

was appointed Convenor of the General Assembly's Church Accommodation Committee. In this role he was indefatigable.¹

This emphasis by Chalmers on the extension of church provision was consistent with his earlier aims for abolition of pauperism. As has been seen from his university lectures, the latter was still preached by him, but as a very important future product of the 1830's church extension movement. Indeed, his plans for the building of new churches and the creation of parishes included provision for an independent poor relief scheme to be operated within each one - an indication of how confident he was of his impact on the new ministers he had helped to train for such posts. However, in fact he had relegated the poor relief scheme within his parochial system to a subsidiary position in his agenda. This was borne out in his practical dealings with individual local church projects in this period. The control of pauperism and the institution of his system to cope with it were not attempted as an automatic and immediate corollary of the parochial system as a whole, as they had been in St. John's. Thus, in the Cowgate, Water of Leith and Dean Village projects of the 1830's, with which Chalmers was directly involved, the

1. In seven years, £305,000 was raised and 222 new churches erected: I.F. MacIver, 'Chalmers as a "Manager" of the Church, 1831-1840', in A.C. Cheyne (ed.) The Practical and the Pious (Edinburgh, 1985), p. 88. Chalmers openly acknowledged in the 1830's that his approach to the issue of church provision had changed. No longer were the proceeds of seat rents enough to build new chapels of ease ideally serving 3,000 inhabitants, as he had argued in 1821. The financial problems he had encountered with the St. John's chapel had obviously taught him several lessons. As with education, he now argued the necessity of adequate government funding for the new churches and parishes required to cover Scotland with his ideal parochial system in smaller units of 2,000 population. When that aid failed to materialise, private subscriptions were solicited from individuals from all walks of life: T. Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 1, C.W., vol. 14, p. 181, vol. 3, C.W., vol. 16, p. 211, Lectures on the Establishment and Extension of National Churches, C.W., vol. 18, p. 54.

poor relief thrust was definitely absent. The provision of the spiritual machinery of pastoral care took precedence.¹

This division of priorities was reiterated by a number of Chalmers' students and proteges. For the purpose of this thesis eight of these young men have been singled out as having proceeded to important positions within the Church of Scotland (and seven of the eight subsequently within the Free Church), and as influential pastors in their own right: William Wallace Duncan (1808-1864), son of Henry Duncan above, and a student at St. Andrews during Chalmers' professorship there; George Lewis (1803-1879) and his brother James (1805-1872), both of whom helped with the Sabbath schools in St. John's and followed Chalmers to St. Andrews; John Gordon Lorimer (1804-1868), St. Andrews; Horatius Bonar (1808-1889), Edinburgh University; John Paul (1795-1873), brother of Henry Paul, the St. John's deacon; James Begg (1808-1883) and John Roxburgh (1806-1880), both of whom became friendly with Chalmers, the latter moving to Free St John's, Glasgow in 1847.²

All of these eight individuals typified Chalmers' 1830's ideal pastor in their concentration on the spiritual life and nurture of

1. C.P., CHA 3.15.38, Paper sent by the General Assembly's Deputation to Lord Melbourne, July 1835 (Printed), Article IV, 4.202.5, 29 March 1833, W.B. Clark to T. Chalmers; 4.205.50, 51, 23 and 27 December 1833, 4.219.41, n.d., and 8 January 1834, 4.282.50, 11 January 1839, Sir John Gladstone to T. Chalmers; 4.228.39, 19 March 1834, J. Sinclair to T. Chalmers; 4.227.20-39, 1834, 4.241.45-50, 1835, 4.225.3-26, 1836, 4.268.9, 20 February 1837, 4.285.43, 1839, R. Paul to T. Chalmers.

2. Duncan and Bonar were ministers in the borders parishes of Hoddam and Kelson, and married two of Robert Lundie's daughters. Lundie was the minister whom Chalmers had consulted concerning a suitable candidate for the St. John's chapel; see above, p. 242, footnote 2; parts of the borders do seem to have been connected through kinship and a common belief in Chalmers' theories.

their parishes.¹ The group as a whole was also concerned with the provision of poor relief. Indeed, Chalmers corresponded with Bonar in particular on the possibility of his new parish of Kelso North with a population of approximately 2,500 acting as a test case for a new poor relief experiment on the lines he had indicated in his Parochial System of 1841.² In addition, Duncan, Lorimer, Paul and Begg all wrote to Chalmers asking his advice and endorsing his views on poor relief. Indeed Begg, during his incumbency in Liberton parish between 1835 and 1843 halved the assessment from £600 a year to £300.³

1. S.R.O., CH2/1173, KSR Kelso, 1834 - 68; CH 2/1173.46, Kelso Treasurer's Accounts, 1814-1855; CH 3/819.1, KSR North Free Church, Kelso, 1839-1881, 10 June, 1 July, "Brief Narrative of Matters in the North Parish Church, Kelso from its erection, 1837", pp. 2-3, 29 July, 17 September, 12 November 1840, 1, 26 April 1841, 5 June 1843; C.P., CHA 4.269.86, 28 January 1837, J. Thomson to T. Chalmers; S.R.O., CH2/926.1, KSR St. David's, Dundee, 17 June, 1, 10 July, 2 September 1839, 9 November 1840, 17 February, 11 October 1841; C.P., CHA 4.299.44, 1 January 1841, G. Lewis to T. Chalmers; 4.206.18, 11 February 1833, N. Grierson to T. Chalmers; 4.224.80, n.d., 4.224.81, 12 July 1834, 4.238.59, 16 May 1835, J. Lewis to T. Chalmers; S.R.O., CH2/236.4, St. John's, Leith, Minutes of Trustees, 24 December 1831, p. 450, 2 January 1837, p. 496, 5 February 1838, p. 543; CH2/236.14, KSR St. John's, Leith, 11 June 1839, 21 October 1840, 19 January, 18, 23 February, 4 March, 12, 21 April, 23 June, 21 July, 24 September 1841, 5 June 1843.

2. See above, p. 269; N.L.S., Mundie letters, MS. 1676/239, 30 December 1840, T. Chalmers to H. Bonar.

3. C.P., CHA 4.178.63, 16 January 1832, W.W. Duncan to T. Chalmers; 4.78.39, 30 January 1827, 4.95.15, 15 February 1828, J.G. Lorimer to T. Chalmers; 4.83.16, 19 March 1827, J. Paul to T. Chalmers; 4.86.22, 27 August 1827, A. Thomson to T. Chalmers; 4.270.69, 1838, J. Begg to T. Chalmers; N.S.A., vol. 1, 'Liberton', pp. 27-8. By 1850 Begg was still openly advocating Chalmers' analysis and solution of pauperism. However, he also advocated a more political approach to the problems of pauperism than Chalmers had ever done. Begg placed much more emphasis on the need to establish satisfactory sanitary conditions in cities, and urged that the unemployed (both prisoners and freemen) be used to farm uncultivated land and should be given both a secular and Christian education. There should also be a Scottish Secretary of State to advise the government on specifically Scottish affairs, such as Scottish pauperism, and increased representation in parliament, with at least 80 Scottish M.P.s: J. Begg, Pauperism and Poor Laws (Edinburgh, 1849), pp. iv, 11, 13, 15, 62-4.

Two of the eight, George Lewis and J.G. Lorimer recorded their own blueprints for the conduct of Scottish parochial life. The similarities between these works and Chalmers' teaching were considerable. Lewis was particularly concerned with education and in 1834 wrote the significant book, Scotland, a half-educated nation, which contained many of Chalmers' principles.¹ From 1833 he held the influential position of editor of the Evangelical newspaper, the Scottish Guardian. In the 1830's he joined the church extension campaign and became a keen supporter of Chalmers' "parochial system", by which Lewis meant the proliferation of parishes, schools and churches throughout Scotland. In 1834 he wrote another important work, The Eldership of the Church of Scotland where he discussed the revitalisation of the elders' role as aide to the minister in his work to spread the word of God. Lewis emphasised the necessity for deacons to relieve the elders of the care of the poor, and praised Chalmers' work in St. John's. He also endorsed the feasibility of Chalmers' retracing process in poor relief. The ultimate aim was to establish "the entire moral machinery of a Scottish parish". He wrote vehemently against an assessment system of relief, and his views on the necessity for church extension and the introduction of deacons to implement such a system were identical to Chalmers'.²

By 1841 Lewis, like Chalmers, was writing of the urgent need to create parishes of 2,000 linked by a network of local agents made up of elders, deacons and teachers, promoting savings banks, sabbath schools, temperance societies and schools. He differed from Chalmers

1. G. Lewis, Scotland, a half-educated nation (Glasgow, 1834), pp. 45, 86-89.

2. G. Lewis, The Eldership of the Church of Scotland, As it was-is-and may be again. Also the Office of Deacons (Glasgow, 1834), pp. 8, 11, 18, 19-21, 22-3.

by accrediting more credence to W.P. Alison's arguments for public health provision, and including a board of health in his ideal set-up to combat the dreadful living conditions in the towns. However, he was firm in his rejection of an assessment poor relief system and openly acknowledged the derivation of many of his ideas from Chalmers' teachings and writings. Even when not directly crediting his former teacher, Chalmers' language often crept into Lewis' writing:

It is not at all necessary for the arguments of those that rely on moral means, that all men should become Christians indeed. Place them only from their infancy in a Christian atmosphere, enjoying in youth the education of Christian principles and Christian habits, brought into the fellowship of Christian society, and under the instruction of Christian ministers, and a change will come over their spirit, sufficient to bring a far greater change in their social comforts.¹

J.G. Lorimer also wrote on the nature of the two essential offices of the deaconship and eldership for the new extended Church of Scotland. Once more, the debt to Chalmers' ideas was apparent. Lorimer's books were a rallying call to all concerned with the revival and advancement of religion throughout the land and he personally was active in the cause of church extension. In his works an ideal was portrayed where suitably committed young men would train as deacons and sabbath school teachers, the two offices acting as a "nursery" for the eldership. In the book on the deacons, Lorimer also covered the

1. G. Lewis, The State of St. David's Parish; with remarks on the Moral and Physical Statistics of Dundee (Dundee, 1841), p.33. Like Begg, Lewis also differed from Chalmers. This was particularly the case in the issue of factory reform. Chalmers found it difficult to overcome his fear of revolution and the inflammatory potential of the crowded towns of factory workers. Lewis was not so intimidated. He was friendly with Richard Oastler, the campaigner for factory reform, and worked on behalf of the Dundee and Scottish operatives. He also tried to interest Chalmers in their cause, apparently with some success: C.P., CHA 4.324.80, 21 December 1841, G. Lewis to T. Chalmers; Brown, Chalmers, p. 367.

topic of poor relief. He argued forcefully for a revival of the office of deacon, emphasising like Chalmers the fact that the elders' involvement in secular affairs tainted their spiritual office. He did not share Chalmers' concentration on the role of man's natural sympathy in the operation of relief. He did, however, argue ideally for the established church's continued position in providing relief for all the poor, Christian and non-Christian alike, and within the parochial structure. Once more, his emphasis was on the importance of the spiritual results of such a system, as opposed to justifying it by a logical description of the mechanics of benevolence as Chalmers had done. In addition, he was not as confident as Chalmers of the ability of the church-centred voluntary system of relief being able to relieve all the poverty that had accumulated in the towns during the years of the assessment system.¹

There were references to deacons having been appointed in the late 1830's in George Lewis's parish of St. David's in Dundee and his brother John's parish of St. John's Leith, but in neither case did the deacons operate an independent poor relief system as had existed in St. John's Glasgow or the other Scottish parishes which had copied Chalmers.² When the younger Evangelicals were coming into parishes there just was not the time to give the same concentration to the problem of poor relief. As with Chalmers himself, there seems to have been a general feeling among this group of younger ministers that the future of the established church locally and nationally, had to be

1. C.P., CHA 4.252.49, 51, 10 June, 16 August 1836, J.G. Lorimer to T. Chalmers; J.G. Lorimer, The Deaconship: A Treatise on the Office of Deacon with Suggestions for its Revival in the Church of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1842), pp. 9, 66-9, 71, 102-4.

2. S.R.O., CH2/926.1., KSR St. David's, Dundee, 1, 10 July, 2 September 1839, 9 November 1840, 17 February, 11 October 1841; J.G. Lorimer, op. cit., p. 116; S.R.O., CH2/236.4, St. John's Leith, Minutes of Trustees, 13 January 1836, p. 488.

secured first and foremost, and that once this had been effected, then they could concentrate on Chalmers' poor relief solution. The influence of Chalmers in moulding the outlook and establishing such priorities in the eight mentioned above was paramount:

They have all passed through one school and have happily taken with them a portion of their Master's Mind. ¹

Ironically, in securing the future of the church, the chance to establish Chalmers' poor relief scheme was to be lost forever. It is no surprise, given the obvious influence Chalmers was capable of having on his students, that nine-tenths of his Edinburgh divinity class joined him in the Free Church in 1843² – the safeguarding of the expression and practice of evangelical principles was more important than the immediate future of the cause of poor relief.

As general concern was mounting about poor relief bills and the growing number of unemployed intensifies in England and Scotland in the later 1830's,³ the government once more commissioned the General Assembly to compile a report on Scotland's poor relief situation. As had happened in 1818, the findings of this Report were moulded to meet the pre-existing opinions of its authors.⁴ Prominent among these authors was Alexander Dunlop, who had already indicated his support for Chalmers' principles of poor relief management, and was in favour of the 'traditional' assessment-free Scottish system. The Report came down heavily in favour of the latter. Of Scotland's

1. C.P., CHA 4.265.76, 19 October 1837, J. Lewis to T. Chalmers.

2. W.G. Blackie, Thomas Chalmers (Edinburgh, 1896), p. 146.

3. T. Ferguson, The Dawn of Scottish Social Welfare (Edinburgh, 1948), pp. 189-91; L.J. Saunders, Scottish Democracy 1815-1840 (Edinburgh, 1950), pp. 196-207.

4. See above, pp. 17-19.

896 parishes, 879 had replied: 126 were voluntarily assessed, 236 legally assessed and 517 were still dependent mainly on church offerings. However, the total population of those 517 amounted to 872,626, whereas that of the two other groups came to 1,443,300. As compared with the 1818 Report, the trend towards assessment was obviously on the increase, with over half of Scotland's population living under some form of rating provision. The 1839 Report also 'proved' that once assessments were introduced, voluntary church door collections fell.¹ Combined with the failure of the established church to keep pace with the growing population, the 1839 Report seemed to sound yet another death-knell for the Scottish parochial system of relief.

Another member of the 1839 General Assembly Committee was David Monypenny, Lord Pitmilley. A retired judge, Monypenny became a staunch supporter of Chalmers on the questions of poor relief and church extension.² In 1836 he indeed recommended to Chalmers that the General Assembly take the lead in recommending that all Scottish parishes should assume control of poor relief, either by arrangements between individual parishes and the local magistrates, as had been done in St. John's, or by an act of Parliament. This was particularly so as to stop church collections being filtered off for other purposes, for example for the church-building campaign, and so diverting them from their original purpose of poor relief. Chalmers' reply to this suggestion has not survived, but from Monypenny's

1. P.P. Sess. 1839 (177), vol. 20, Report by a Committee of the General Assembly on the Management of the Poor in Scotland, pp. 134, 140-2.

2. D. Monypenny, Remarks on the Poor Laws (Edinburgh, 1836), pp. 363-5; D. Monypenny, An Outline of the Scottish Ecclesiastical Establishment (Edinburgh, 1838), p. 154.

subsequent letter it is apparent that Chalmers was strongly opposed to this idea. Monypenny wrote back saying that Chalmers had convinced him he was wrong and that:

The primary object unquestionably is to increase the number of churches, and it was chiefly as a natural consequence of such an encrease, that I looked for an augmentation of the parochial funds for the Poor. As however it appears a considerable part of any addition that may be made to these funds, is, at this time, required for the primary object, the secondary one must, of course be postponed, and we must wait patiently in the reliance that, in a certain time, the Church Collections will not only be greatly enlarged, but will be almost entirely devoted to their proper use.¹

The remainder of Moneyppenny's correspondence with Chalmers reiterated his full endorsement of Chalmers' poor relief principles, and also Chalmers' tactics for enacting those principles through the church extension campaign. In a pamphlet on the Scottish poor laws in 1840 Moneyppenny asserted that he accepted Chalmers' premise that it was upon the operation of man's natural instinct to relieve suffering in his fellow man that his ideal poor relief system hinged, but agreed that Chalmers was correct in first ensuring an adequate parochial provision to establish and endorse those natural instincts.² Although neither Chalmers nor Moneyppenny ever acknowledged it, this was tantamount to accepting Chalmers had been wrong in his initial statements of the Tron and St. John's period that assessments need only be abolished and the entire natural system of relief would automatically flood into action, regardless of church provision or

1. C.P., CHA 4.254.29, 33, 27 August, 16 September 1836, D. Monypenny to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.254.35, 29 November 1836, 4.267.14, 16, 18, 20, 15 and 17 January, 31 March, 24 June 1837, 4.276.96, 7 November 1838, 4.285.16, 22 March 1839, 4.294.5, 6 May 1840, D. Monypenny to T. Chalmers; D. Monypenny, Proposed Alterations of the Scottish Poor Laws (Edinburgh, 1840), pp. 42-3.

commitment.¹ The list of prerequisites for this natural system to come into effect was growing longer as the years advanced and as it became increasingly apparent that the practical implementation of Chalmers' theories was not succeeding. Yet Monypenny fully endorsed Chalmers' Parochial System of 1841, and concluded that it was impossible for any one who read it "to resist its conclusions".²

Another member of the 1839 General Assembly committee who was opposed to the English assessment system was Sir Charles Dalrymple Fergusson, 5th baronet of Kilkerran, Ayrshire (1800-1849). Fergusson, along with Monypenny and John Campbell Colquhoun (1803-1870), M.P. for the Kilmarnock burghs from 1837 to 1841 and convenor of the Church Endowments committee, tried to rally the troops for a final effort for at least an endorsement of the traditional Scottish non-assessment system, and at best a full-bloodied implementation of Chalmers' complete parochial system.³ Even at what was to be the last opportunity to do something before the Disruption took events out of their hands, Chalmers was winning influential converts to his side in the persons of Robert Saunders Dundas, 2nd Viscount Melville (1771-1851), and Sir David Brewster (1781-1868), both of whom, on reading Monypenny's pamphlet and Chalmers' Parochial System were finally convinced of both the necessity and possibility of the latter.⁴

At the same time as these developments, however, an equally vocal but opposing body of men was making their opinions heard. Spearheaded

1. See above, pp. 97-8, 135-6.

2. C.P., CHA 4.300.20, 8 October 1841, D. Monypenny to T. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 4.291.11, 29 June 1840, Sir Charles Dalrymple Fergusson to T. Chalmers; 4.297.46, 27 November 1841, J.C. Colquhoun to T. Chalmers.

4. C.P., CHA 4.300.10, 16 October 1841, Viscount Melville to T. Chalmers; 4.302.13, 2 January 1842, Sir David Brewster to T. Chalmers.

by such medical practitioners as William Pulteney Alison (1790-1859), Andrew Buchanan and C.R. Baird, they made a direct correlation between the high incidence of pauperism and the spread of disease. They were in favour of an assessment system as the only sure method of alleviating the dreadful physical conditions of Scotland's congested towns.¹ In line with the developing science of statistics, they backed up their claims with a frightening range of data on child mortality and death rates during fever epidemics in Glasgow and Edinburgh.²

Alison was as anxious as Chalmers to preserve high moral and Christian standards in Scotland, but came to the exact opposite conclusion of how best to do this. He argued that it was only when a man was healthy, and adequately fed, housed and clothed that he had the stamina to listen to and learn from such instruction.³ He repeatedly referred to the necessity of taking into account the current "complex state of society": congested industrial towns required different solutions than had worked in small rural parishes.⁴ The only just and effective solution was to increase assessments and

1. R. Cage, The Scottish Poor Law 1745-1845 (Edinburgh, 1981), pp. 125-30.

2. W.P. Alison, Observations on the Management of the Poor in Scotland and its effects on the Health of the Great Towns (Edinburgh, 1840), pp. 1-6, 14-30, (hereafter Observations); and see above, p. 312.

3. C.P., CHA 4.280.11, 23 December 1839, W.P. Alison to T. Chalmers: in this letter Alison sent Chalmers a copy of his treatise with "sincere regrets" that he was in opposition to Chalmers. However, he added that he had great respect for "the benevolent intention of your labours", and ultimately he, Alison, agreed that "Religious and moral instruction is the grand instrument of human improvement". Alison also invited Chalmers to dine with him: 4.288.36, n.d., W.P. Alison to T. Chalmers. (Chalmers was not so conciliatory towards Alison); Alison, Observations, pp. 37-43, Reply to the Pamphlet Entitled "Proposed Alteration of the Scottish Poor Law Considered and Commented on by David Monypenny, Esq. of Pitmilly", (Edinburgh, 1840), p. 8 (hereafter Reply).

4. Alison, Observations, pp. 42, 92, 101, 129, 184.

allowances to the poor, grant relief to the able-bodied unemployed, and build workhouses and hospitals in Scotland's towns.¹ The major flaw in his opponents' arguments, Alison pointed out, was the fact that they simply repeated the principles of their scheme and the methods to carry it out, but made no attempt to analyse the condition of the poor themselves.² In particular, he accused Monypenny and Chalmers of doing the one thing that Chalmers had started off in 1817 as asserting he would never do: confusing pauperism and poverty. Chalmers had claimed his scheme was a remedy for both these conditions; Alison pointed out that he had never shown that poverty was in fact any the less for his experiment in St. John's.³ He also chided Chalmers as being unrealistic in his expectations of what the poor could save and so provide for themselves and others in times of distress. According to Alison, the St. John's experiment had thus failed.⁴

Partly at Alison's instigation, an Association was formed in Edinburgh in 1840 whose aim was to obtain an official government inquiry into Scotland's pauperism. Spurred on by the Association's agitation, the massive unemployment figures, and the distress in some

1. Ibid., pp. 129-80; Alison, Reply, p. 2.

2. Alison, Reply, pp. 4-5; Alison, Illustrations of the Practical Operation of the Scottish System of Management of the Poor (Edinburgh, 1846), p. 47.

3. Alison, Reply, pp. 5-6, 61-4; Alison, Reply to Dr. Chalmers' Objections to an Improvement of the Legal Provision for the Poor in Scotland (Edinburgh, 1841), p. vi (hereafter Reply to Chalmers).

4. Alison, Reply to Chalmers, pp. 8-9, 11 ff. Alison and Chalmers held a public debate in Glasgow on their opposing poor relief theories: see Brown, Chalmers, pp. 292-3; O. Checkland, 'Chalmers and William Pulteney Alison: A Conflict of Views on Scottish Social Policy', in The Practical and the Pious, ed. A.C. Cheyne (Edinburgh, 1985), pp. 130-40.

of the textiles centres, particularly Paisley,¹ it was decided in January 1843 that a Government Commission of Enquiry was "indispensable" owing to the "unmitigated distress, which has existed for so long in certain manufacturing Districts of Scotland".² In May of that year the Disruption of the Church of Scotland took place. Chalmers led nearly one third of the ministers out of the General Assembly to form the Free Church - almost 40% of the church's communicants followed. Although Chalmers still claimed to be within the established church, having left its corrupt part behind, the reality was different in that the Free Church was never recognised as such.³ Poor relief reform seemed even more urgent as the Disruption had finally torn aside the illusory curtain of an adequate official relief system struggling to cope in the towns without adequate churches or personnel. Thus the Disruption further hastened the conclusion of the 1844 Poor Law Commission in the 1845 Poor Relief Amendment (Scotland) Act.

An extensive treatment of the Disruption, the 1844 Poor Law Commission Report, and the 1845 Act does not come within the confines of this thesis. The end result for the conduct of poor relief in Scotland was the establishment of local parochial boards which still

1. G. Nicholls, A History of the Scotch Poor Law (London, 1856), pp. 128-34; T. C. Smout, 'The Strange Intervention of Edward Twisleton: Paisley in Depression, 1841-3', in The Search for Wealth and Stability, ed. T.C. Smout (London, 1979), p. 252 ff. ; R. Cage, op. cit., pp. 131-3: Cage described one of the ministers in Paisley, Patrick Brewster, as "perhaps the most outspoken of the Established Church's ministers against the administration of the Scottish poor law".

2. N.L.S., Melville Papers, MS. 642/279, 7 January 1843, Sir James Graham (Home Secretary) to 2nd Lord Melville.

3. W. Ferguson, Scotland 1689 to the Present (Edinburgh, 1968), p. 312.

incorporated the kirk sessions, but also included far wider secular representation. A National Board of Supervision¹ was also appointed, although its powers were not mandatory. Thus, a generalised and partly centralised relief system - the antithesis of Chalmers' plan for small local units controlling relief - had been intensified. However, assessments were still not compulsory - although the number of boards levying them steadily increased after 1845¹ - and the able-bodied unemployed still had no legal right to relief. There was a limited increase of medical provision. In the short term, therefore, neither Alison nor Chalmers had won.

With the formation of the Free Church, Chalmers' interest in poor relief did not disappear. He still maintained that the parochial system of relief he had advocated for so long was the only solution for Scotland's problems of pauperism and poverty, and never publicly recanted of his analysis of the St. John's experiment. His energies between 1843 and his death in 1847 were mainly consumed by fund-raising efforts to provide churches, manses, and schools for the Free Church. However, he did spare some time to poor relief, and for a complete survey of the development of his theories on the subject it is necessary to look at his writings and actions right up to 1847.

As has been seen, Chalmers' advocacy of the appointment of deacons was central to his parochial poor relief scheme. It was also adopted by such younger Evangelicals as George Lewis and J.G. Lorimer, and had been suggested before Chalmers' writings on the subject, by Burns and Ogilvy.² The Free Church adopted this lay order in

1. Ibid., p. 313; Cage, op. cit., pp. 147-50; Nicholls, op. cit., pp. 180 ff.

2. See above, p. 99.

October 1843, intimating that deacons be appointed to every local Free Church. Their tasks were to help in the collection of the various sustentation funds for churches, schools and foreign missions. They were also to look after the general secular concerns of the church - the upkeep of the material fabric, seat-letting, communion expenses and the like - and the welfare of poor communicants. There of course lay the main difference with Chalmers' blueprint for the deaconship. Despite its assertions of being the true established church, the Free Church did not even attempt to distribute relief to all the poor within the geographical confines of the Church of Scotland and civic parishes.¹

That deacons were in fact appointed at a local level in the Free Church and carried out their designated duties is amply documented. The surviving evidence includes incidences of poor relief disbursement, but it was always limited to the poor, particularly widows, of Free Church congregations.² This limitation of poor

1. T. Chalmers, Address by Dr. Chalmers to Elders, Deacons, and Collectors of the Free Church ... March 4 1845. From the Scottish Guardian (n.p., 1845). This approach was contrary to the Free Church's initial policy concerning the religious and educational welfare of Scotland in their attempts to emulate a national church, but eventually a 'gathered' church principle had to be accepted in these respects also: Brown, Chalmers, pp. 337-47.

2. In May 1844 the Free Church General Assembly debated "The State of the Poor", and unanimously agreed to continue to attend to the spiritual and material needs of the poor generally: The Witness, 25 May 1844. In practice however, their attention was confined to their own poor: S.R.O., CH3/819.1, North Free Church, Kelso, 1 April, May 1844; CH3/348.1, KSR Free St. John's, Dundee, 12 December 1843, 3 January 1844, 7 March 1844; CH3/348.3, St. John's Free Church Deacon's Minutes, 28 November 1843, 22 and 24 April 1844, 25 November 1845; M.L., S.B.205.217364, Free St. Marks, Glasgow, Minute Book of the Deacons' Court, 1848-1864: e.g. 13 September, 2 October, 27 November, 5 and 25 December 1848, 8 January, 5 February 1849; C.P., CHA 4.317.72, 23 October 1845, W. Grant to T. Chalmers (Moulin); 4.316.56, 9 May 1845, R. Buchanan to T. Chalmers (Glasgow); 4.316.36, 3 February 1845, G. Bell to T. Chalmers (Edinburgh); 4.318.9, 18 April 1845, H. Handyside to T. Chalmers; 4.315.60, 17 December 1844, J. Smith to T. Chalmers (Greenock); 4.315.77, 25 March 1844, W. Todd to T. Chalmers (Kirkmaiden, by Stranraer).

relief to communicants was the subject of two letters from John Douglas Campbell, 7th duke of Argyll (1777-1847) to Chalmers in February 1845. Argyll wrote that he thought the Free Church ought to contribute to the Church of Scotland funds for poor relief. Chalmers' reply is missing, but part of its contents can be gleaned from Argyll's second letter. In relation to contributions to the general poor fund, Chalmers had apparently asked Argyll:

... if it can be expected that the Free Church should give of their substance to that Party which by the grossest injustice has driven them from their endowments.¹

Thus the poor relief policy of the Free Church was indeed sanctioned by Chalmers. This did not stop him from publicly speaking out against the proposed new poor law. In his article on it in February 1845 he wrote praising "the voluntary system of charity" yet again, and agitated for a permissive clause in the new act to allow parishes to try it out.²

This shift by the Free Church to a concentration on its own poor was of course understandable: its resources were stretched to the limit in trying to duplicate schools and churches throughout Scotland. In addition, Chalmers' sanctioning of it did not in itself constitute a negation of his parochial poor relief plans and theories. Yet, it was one more sign that the practicalities of the situation had altered the field of labour open to him, and therefore had also altered the feasibility of his solution. Henceforth, Chalmers concentrated upon advocating his "territorial system", as opposed to the parochial system, of home missionaries in the large cities. This was a call to all denominations to take small areas and localise them through agents

1. C.P., CHA 4.316.33, 21 February 1845, duke of Argyll to T. Chalmers; 4.316.29, 11 February 1845, same to same.

2. T. Chalmers, North British Review, 2 (1845), pp. 471-514.

visiting, advising, encouraging, teaching, and evangelising the poor. The material welfare of the poor would also automatically be improved as a result of their spiritual and moral elevation, Chalmers argued, but the agents themselves, unlike the St. John's deacons, were to have nothing to do with the actual administration of any form of official or private relief. All that remained of the poor relief side of the St. John's experiment was a greater emphasis on savings banks as an "auxiliary" to the local church and school and as an alternative to "idle and unnecessary expenditure by the poor". By 1845 Chalmers seemed even more out of touch with the problem of eking out an existence let alone saving during the precarious existence of many in Scotland's towns. ¹

The most famous example of the implementation of Chalmers' territorial system was of course in the West Port in Edinburgh. Brown has described how the system was set up, and shown how limited its results were. The area chosen encompassed Chalmers' old parochial ideal of 2,000 inhabitants, the majority of whom had no connection with any church. It was divided into twenty districts, a visitor ideally being assigned to each one. However, in practice it proved impossible to recruit and sustain a continuous band of necessarily committed agents. Another problem was Chalmers' inability, through lack of time and increasing frailty, to direct operations personally. The poor relief side of the St. John's experiment was replaced by a savings bank in the West Port, to encourage the poor to be

1. T. Chalmers, 'On Savings Banks' in North British Review, 3 (1845) pp. 337-8, 343; T. Chalmers, article in the Scottish Guardian, xiv (11 March 1845): C.P., CHA 5.13.188, Appeal to ... On Behalf of the Inhabitants of the West Port, for a Church and Schools (printed, 27 December 1845); T. Chalmers, Churches and Schools for the working classes, 27 December 1845 (Edinburgh, 1846).

economically self-sufficient. This also proved to be unsuccessful. Once more, as had happened in Glasgow, the most effective side of the West Port scheme was its work in education. Brown has calculated that the provision of the missionary, William Tasker (1811-1879), schools, and general expenses cost at least £1,137 in the first sixteen months, while Chalmers was claiming it only required £100 to £150 a year to run such a territorial scheme. In fact, it was only through the wealthy donations from the likes of the American philanthropist James Lennox that it was able to survive at all.¹

There were a few attempts to implement Chalmers' territorial system in Edinburgh and in Glasgow, including Free St. John's. Chalmers' followers in St. John's were faithful to the end.² As had happened in the West Port, however, these schemes did not include a specific poor relief policy. Once more, women were active in all of

1. S.J. Brown, 'The Disruption and Urban Poverty: Thomas Chalmers and the West Port Operation in Edinburgh, 1844-7', Scottish Church History Society Records, 20 (1978), pp. 65-89.

2. In 1843, the St. John's minister, Brown, the majority of the congregation, eighteen of the twenty elders, ten of the fourteen deacons, and all twenty-eight Sabbath school teachers joined Free St. John's which was opened on 8 June 1845, with Chalmers present. John Roxburgh took over as minister in 1847. In 1845 the congregation followed Chalmers' lead and both contributed to the West Port, Edinburgh and established a West Port style operation in a district south of the Gallowgate. They also continued in their tradition of using female workers, and providing educational facilities. Between 1843 and 1873 the congregation contributed over £100,000 to the various Free Church schemes. By 1875, it had 13 elders, a full time missionary, a 'Bible-woman', 23 deacons, 6 week-day schools with an attendance of over 3,000, 6 Sunday schools with nearly 700 regular attenders, and a society of ladies to distribute poor relief to "poorer members of the Church": W. Keddle, Memorials of the St. John's Congregation (Glasgow, 1874), pp. 35, 44-5, 47-8, 50; G.U.L., MS. 1036, 22 November 1843, T. Chalmers to W. Buchanan; C.P., CHA 4.322.46, 15 January 1846, 5.13.99, 3 March 1846, M. Montgomerie to T. Chalmers; 5.13.64, 9 March 1846, G. Heggie to T. Chalmers; 5.13.50, 52, 13 and 25 March 1846, W. Gilmour to T. Chalmers; 5.13.107, 31 March 1846, A. Naismith to T. Chalmers; 5.13.128, 22 April 1846, H. Rainy to T. Chalmers; 5.13.126, 27 April 1846, J. Playfair to T. Chalmers; 5.13.109, 13 May 1846, C. Naismith to T. Chalmers; 5.13.142, 2 December 1846, D. Stow to T. Chalmers.

these operations. In the West Port itself there were twenty-six members of the "Ladies of the West Port Benevolent Society", headed by Mrs. Chalmers and Mrs. Tasker, and twelve female sabbath school teachers. There was also a committee of twelve for the "Ladies' School Committee" to supervise the girls' school, the moral and religious education of the girls, and their cleanliness. Elizabeth, duchess of Gordon (1794-1864) carried out a similar experiment in the Canongate and was helped by Charlotte, countess of Effingham (1776-1864), the daughter of the third earl of Rosebery.¹

It was in a letter in 1846 to one of these female philanthropists, the countess of Effingham, that Chalmers justified his non-provision of any official poor relief fund in the West Port. He was convinced:

... it would vitiate and distemper our whole system and raise an insuperable barrier in the way of achieving a pure Christian and moral good among the families of our district.²

Thus by the end of his life Chalmers' emphasis was firmly on the moral edification and conversion of the masses. This of course was not new - it had always been part and parcel of the aims and vehicle of his works and practice in poor relief management - but now the abolition of pauperism and the provision of relief were firmly relegated to subsidiary benefits. This was what he had in fact begun by arguing in the period from 1810 to 1815.³ In the intervening years he had

1. C.P., CHA 5.13.287, n.d., List of Ladies of the West port Benevolent Society; 5.13.280, 24 June 1846, Teachers in the West Port Sabbath Schools; 5.13.278 n.d., (printed) Regulations for the Ladies School Committee; 4.323.77, 79, 81, 83, 85, 9 and 12 January, 14 February, 8 and 17 April 1846, 4.328.90, 30 April 1847, 5.13.54, 56, n.d., duchess of Gordon to T. Chalmers; 4.317.35-53 (ten letters), 28 March - 27 November 1845, 4.323.3, n.d., countess of Effingham to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 5.13.14, 10 January 1846, T. Chalmers to Lady Effingham.

3. See above, pp. 33-9.

still emphasised the primary importance of the provision of churches and the necessity for Christians to go out and seek the labouring poor to win them for Christ, particularly in the 1830's. However, he had also maintained a distinct poor relief campaign that was an intrinsic part of this process, and which during his St. John's period took him over almost completely in his theorising.

In this letter of 1846 Chalmers repeated his belief in voluntary charity and "the operation of individual sympathy" - his philosophical analysis of the problem had remained intact. Nonetheless, his practical solution was now different: there was no need to establish a St. John's style deaconry in its role of scrutiniser of the poor and distributor of voluntary relief offerings. The problem would take care of itself if the country was covered by territorial districts and peopled by its resulting moral, religious, well-educated inhabitants. This was the very opposite of his initial claims that Christianity was not needed to effect the only solution to pauperism: if assessments were withdrawn the people would automatically fall back on their natural instincts of self-preservation and help one another. Christianity would only speed up the process.¹ Once more, the practicalities of the situation had driven him to this since assessments had not been abolished, and as a member of what was in effect a Dissenting church he no longer had any say in the official relief system. Perhaps it had also proved too difficult, however, to unearth the "natural" man behind the industrialised craft and factory worker, or the rural labourer living in a more complicated industrial society. Man's environment had changed him - only Christianity had remained the same.

1. See above, pp. 97-8, 135-6.

Between 1845 and 1847 a crippling famine swept over Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland. Brown asserts that the resulting poverty, Chalmers' leadership of fund-raising efforts to relieve it, and his advocacy of massive government aid to alleviate the situation indicated that he finally regarded the state "as the only institution capable of enforcing social justice".¹ Yet Chalmers' writings on the famine do not confirm this impression. In an article in the North British Review in May 1847, just before his death, Chalmers did indeed say that the current famine situation was exceptional and suggested a government grant and a tax on assessable inhabitants. However, as far back as 1817 he had intimated that there would be "occasional extraordinary crises" particularly in trade.² In 1847 he still argued that those crises would be infrequent, and affirmed that in "ordinary" times spontaneous benevolence could take care of all indigent poor, the diseased being taken care of in public hospitals. He also claimed that the Highlands were worse off because of the 1845 Scottish Poor Law, which had discouraged people from helping one another as much as they were able. Chalmers' research into the famine, and his correspondence with individuals in the Highlands also imply that he was confirmed in this belief that a large legal official relief system was detrimental. Voluntary charity remained the answer, but when crises occurred on the scale of the Irish famine then large injections of funds was both unavoidable and the correct Christian

1. Brown, Chalmers, p. 369.

2. See above, p. 96.

response in the circumstances.¹

Chalmers himself summed up the thoughts and feelings uppermost in his mind towards the end of his life. In a letter to William Buchanan his faithful St. John's worker, he revealed:

It is my earnest prayer that God would take unto Himself His own power and reign over our hearts - for nothing in nature though operating with its utmost force on nature's affections and nature's sensibilities will of itself arouse us from the incumbent carnality and earthliness that weigh so heavily upon our hearts.²

The Calvinist had finally won over the Smithean; the evangelical over the political economist.

1. T. Chalmers, 'The Political Economy of a Famine', North British Review, 7 (May 1847), pp. 247-90, especially pp. 260-1, 279, 282, 284; C.P., Miscellaneous, 7 December 1846, T. Chalmers to J MacKenzie and others; CHA 4.325.50, 14 December 1846, J. MacKenzie to T. Chalmers; 4.325.56, 15 December 1846, A.K. MacKinnon to J. MacKenzie; 4.330.7, 28 May 1847, A. Nicol to T. Chalmers; Miscellaneous, 5 May 1847, T. Chalmers to (copy of a circular letter): such questions as: "What effect do you think the Poor Law has had on "this habit of spontaneous kindness among neighbours?" also reveal he was still thinking along the lines of legal charity killing spontaneous benevolence.

2. G.U.L., MS. 1036, 21 January 1847, T. Chalmers to W. Buchanan.

CHAPTER EIGHT: The Wider Impact. "... the permissive and gradual method of getting rid of the Incubus." 1

The influence of Chalmers' poor relief principles was not confined to Scotland. Chalmers personally agitated for the reform of England's poor relief system, which, he argued, had reached a far more corrupt stage than Scotland's, and to that degree would be more difficult to reclaim. His ideas and their implementation in St. John's were also influential in other countries, although less directly as a result of any promotion on his part. Most notable was the impact on those American states facing similar urban and industrial crises as Britain was experiencing. Chalmers' influence on the general British relief scene, on Europe, and the transatlantic impact of his work will form the subject of this final chapter.

By the early nineteenth century England was covered by a multiplicity of poor relief practices. Throughout these local variations there was a common theme of relief being provided out of a legal tax, with labourers who had a three year settlement in a parish having a legal right to claim that relief. As has been seen, both these phenomena were far less common in Scotland, a fact that made many Englishmen look north to see if there was any remedy for their situation in the 'Scottish' approach to poor relief. The basis of the English system was anathema to Chalmers. He argued against its anti-Malthusian principles in its public relief system which created pauperism and encouraged immorality and degradation.²

As was pointed out in chapter one, an English school of thought

1. C.P., CHA 4.223.87, 12 April 1834, J.J. Gurney to T. Chalmers.

2. T. Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 2, C.W., vol. 15, p. 136 ff.

equally opposed to these practices and for similar reasons existed before Chalmers' writings had begun to appear.¹ Poynter traces the existence of an 'abolitionist' group drawn from political economists, churchmen and theorists, and coming to the fore intermittently from the end of the eighteenth century up to the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act. Their arguments against the poor law and for its abolition centred on its tendency to create pauperism, demoralise labour, encourage improvident marriages, and undermine industry. All of these were to become familiar in Chalmers' writings. Indeed, as early as 1752 one of the first English abolitionists, Thomas Alcock, was referring to a natural law for relief implanted in every man and providing an "'innate Philanthropy'".²

An off-shoot of the abolitionist group formed the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor - the S.B.C.P. - in 1792. Although not in favour of the complete removal of the poor law, this group agitated for greater discrimination in relief, the encouragement of self-sufficiency and the importance of visiting the poor. With such illustrious promoters as William Wilberforce, Sir Thomas Bernard and Patrick Colquhoun, the credence given to these ideas was not negligible, and provided a groundwork in England for Chalmers' ideas to build upon. In this context it is interesting that during his conversion Chalmers had been particularly moved by Wilberforce's book on Practical Christianity, that the S.B.C.P. had been influenced by the district visiting scheme of Von Voght in Hamburg, as Chalmers

1. See above, pp. 2-4; also, O.R. McGregor, 'Social Research and Social Policy in the Nineteenth Century', The British Journal of Sociology, 8 (1957), 146-57.

2. J.R. Poynter, Society and Pauperism. English Ideas on Poor Relief, 1795-1834 (London, 1969), pp. xx-xxv, 40-44, 47 ff., 88-98.

himself was, and that Colquhoun was from Glasgow, his writings on indigence and crime being particularly popular in America.¹ This inter-connection of personnel and ideas and their influence in moulding the outlook of many men in the Napoleonic era and its aftermath is obviously important, and supports the impression of a general pattern of theories on poor relief common to the developing industrial nations of the period.

In his Edinburgh Review articles on poor relief in 1817 and 1818, Chalmers' attack on the English relief system was similar to the one that had developed among the English abolitionists. His solution for its reform was a more gradual one than the one he proposed for Scotland, since England was that much farther away from a pure natural system of relief. In his second volume of The Christian and Civic Economy in 1823, Chalmers expanded that solution. He proposed that under a permissive act of parliament, any English parish might voluntarily establish an agency similar to the St. John's one. This would be incorporated into the already existing set-up in England, centred on the Anglican parish vestry which would be expanded to include lay visitors in charge of the new poor who were to be relieved out of voluntary church collections, as opposed to the situation in most areas where often reluctant overseers were appointed annually by J.P.s and administered funds from a legal assessment. As Chalmers had proposed in Scotland, the old poor would continue to be relieved out of an assessment.²

Much of the information Chalmers used for these proposals was gained during a tour of England he made in 1822. This visit was

1. See above, p. 3, and below, p. 391.

2. T. Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 2, C.W., vol. 15, pp. 134-226.

efficiently organised by himself and William Collins. Collins went ahead of Chalmers on a business trip which included establishing links with individuals in some of the parishes and ensuring a network of hospitality and ready information for his pastor.¹ During this tour Chalmers not only collected information, but established long-standing relations with individuals involved in the administration of the poor laws in such places as Liverpool, Manchester, Stockport, Birmingham and Bristol. On his return to Scotland he attempted to procure legislation for his solution to the English poor-relief situation, but, like the Kennedy bill, the effect was still-born.²

According to Poynter, the later 1820's witnessed the demise of any serious reception of plans to abolish completely the English poor laws as the economic situation of the country improved. However, the principles behind the abolitionists stance - of praising voluntary charity and safeguarding against the demoralisation of the poor - survived.³ The following section will demonstrate that part of that survival is attributable to Chalmers' influence.

There is evidence of an impressive array of support for Chalmers' poor relief theories in England. His printed works, the contacts established during his 1822 tour, and his links with leading politicians, churchmen and Dissenters led to the infiltration of his poor relief theories to a grass-roots level, where it was possible in England to implement very effective reform since before 1834 there was little central organisation.⁴ In Chalmers' correspondence there is

1. C.P., CHA 6 1.10, Journal, 29 August - 19 September 1822, English Tour - included in this is an extensive list of thirty-one questions on poor relief practice which Chalmers forwarded to the various English parishes or sent after his visit, e.g. see CHA 3.9.62, 26 April 1823, T. Chalmers to the Rev. L. Richmond; 3.9.84, 3 January 1823, T. Chalmers to S. Gurney; St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.230, 14 August 1821, and C.P., CHA 4.19.65, 9 September 1822, W. Collins to T. Chalmers.

2. Brown, Chalmers, p. 157.

evidence of a considerable body of agreement with Chalmers and various attempts to put his ideas into practice. These letters merit particular attention.

The most obvious arena for sympathy with Chalmers' principles was the Scottish presbyterian churches in England. Many Scotsmen moved to such centres as Liverpool and London - as indeed several of Chalmers' own brothers had done. There they maintained their links with the Church of Scotland through Scotch kirks. Chalmers was often asked to preach in such churches, whenever it was learned that he was planning a trip south. He had very close ties with one particular Scottish church in England, the National Scotch Church in London, where his former assistant from St. John's, Edward Irving, had moved in 1822. In his correspondence with Chalmers, Irving referred to having spoken to his congregation about Chalmers' scheme for "the melioration of the lower classes", and added that some of them wanted to do something along the lines of Chalmers' local visitation system. The direct product of this was the appointment of deacons in Irving's London church. These deacons were not involved in the official poor relief structure of the city, but seem to have been more concerned more with a bid to visit, evangelise and encourage the poor. They continued in this role long after Irving himself had left.¹ Another Scotsman living in London and convinced by Chalmers' plans for English poor relief was David D. Scott, a brother of one of Chalmers' St. Andrews' pupils William Scott Moncrieff. David described the influence of Chalmers' Christian and Civic Economy in London, and also referred to

1. C.P., CHA 4.21.1, 21 January 1822, E. Irving to T. Chalmers; 4.72.27, May 1827, Mr. Dinwiddie to T. Chalmers; 4.419.55, 26 April 1830, and 4.169.57, 24 November 1831, C. Vertue to T. Chalmers; 4.199.56, 16 January 1833, D. Blyth, W. Hamilton and other elders and deacons of the National Scotch Church, London to T. Chalmers.

a number of "Protestant ladies" working among "the profligate and the poor" in the city.¹

There is also evidence of Scotsmen applying Chalmers' theories to the general pastoral supervision of English parishes outside the metropolis. For example, William Rose, a former sabbath school teacher under Chalmers in the Tron and St. John's, moved to Liverpool in 1822 to set up in business there. He worshipped in an Anglican church. His pastor, Mr. Wilson, wanted to introduce Chalmers' "Parochial Agency System", having already adopted his local plan for sabbath schools in which Rose was once more active.² John T. Paterson, the minister of the Scotch Church in Sunderland wrote to Chalmers to ask his encouragement for the local rector and curate who wanted to try Chalmers' system of local parish schools.³ In Newcastle Chalmers had contact with several men interested in his organisation of local sabbath schools, and in setting up a "Christian Instruction Society" to evangelise the poor. This society was described in Newcastle as "one of Chalmers' offspring".⁴

Two of Chalmers' most influential Anglo-Scottish supporters concerned more with the spritual side of the parochial programme were Sir John Gladstone and his son William Ewart. They not only supported Chalmers' ideas on church extension in England but also actively helped Chalmers' projects in the Cowgate and the Water of Leith in the

1. C.P., CHA 4.128.13, 15, 15 June and 28 August 1829, D. D. Scott to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.61.19, 12 May 1826, W. Rose to T. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 4.28.29, 21 January 1823, J.T. Paterson to T. Chalmers.

4. St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.1, 7 January 1823, G. Fife Angus to T. Chalmers; M.L., MS. 3/27, 14 May 1824, T. Chalmers to J. Dalglish; C.P., CHA 4.203.5, 19 March 1833, J. Duncan to T. Chalmers; CHA. 4.208.5, 9 March 1833, J. Laughton to T. Chalmers.

1830's. William also agreed with Chalmers' theory that a diminution of the poor law would accompany effective spiritual reclamation of the poor.¹ Englishmen were also interested in the general pastoral side of Chalmers' writings and experiences in poor relief. A landowner in Howden wrote to Chalmers in 1822 telling him he had read the first volume of The Christian and Civic Economy and wanted to apply it to the causes of church extension and the spiritual improvement of the area. He asked Chalmers' advice on how to do that in an English situation.²

More specific support for the poor relief side of Chalmers' parochial package of The Christian and Civic Economy is also apparent in Chalmers' English correspondence, and in the published writings of some of those correspondents. As a result of his conversion and his rise to fame as a powerful preacher of the word of God, Chalmers was introduced to such leaders of the London evangelical Clapham Sect as Wilberforce and Zachary Macaulay, when he visited London in 1817. Both these men were concerned with social issues such as slavery, and Wilberforce's involvement in the S.B.C.P. reflected his interest in poor relief. Two others of the Sect wrote to Chalmers about his ideas on pauperism: Thomas Babington in London, and John William Cunningham in Harrow, London. Babington became friendly with Chalmers, visiting him in St. Andrews and inviting him to stay with him in London. In 1829 he urged Chalmers to publicly repeat his aversion to the poor

1. C.P., CHA 4.6.16, 12 August 1817, 4.8.1-4, 17 and 26 February, 23 March, 14 April 1818, 4.17.75, 7 April 1821, 4.44.12, 14, 15 and 21 September 1825, 4.223.17, 19, 23, 24, 26, 28, 29, 7 and 26 February, 15 April, 3 and 16 September, 7 October, n.d., 1834, Sir J. Gladstone to T. Chalmers; 4.223.31, 33, 37, 16 January, 29 September, 30 December 1834, W.E.Gladstone to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.21.18, 20, 22, 16 April, 20 May, 15 August 1822, J. King to T. Chalmers.

rate system in England, and offered his help in spreading his ideas on the poor laws.¹ Cunningham also came to be on intimate terms with the Scottish Evangelical leader, and likewise openly supported Chalmers' proposal for the eventual abolition of the poor laws, although he was concerned about doing so without inciting a "universal conflagration" among the "lower orders". His brother, Francis Cunningham, the vicar of Lowestoft, was likewise sympathetic to Chalmers' emphasis on voluntary charity.²

Chalmers also received backing for his theories from the leading Quaker philanthropist, Joseph John Gurney (1788-1847). In 1834 Gurney was so concerned with the state of the labouring poor in the Norwich area, he had a private interview with the leading Whigs, Lords Grey and Althorp, informing them of Chalmers' views on the poor laws and his gradual permissive method of "getting rid of the Incubus". Although Gurney was doubtful of having convinced them, he was nonetheless one more example of an influential philanthropist concerned with the spiritual and material condition of the lower classes who gave public support to Chalmers' ideas and tried to do something to have those ideas implemented.³ Gurney's sister, Elizabeth (1780-1845) married Joseph Fry in 1800. She became famous as an advocate of prison reform and her general charitable works. It is apparent that she met Chalmers in 1818 and later supported his emphasis on the importance of local visiting and district societies to reach the poor

1. C.P., CHA 4.19.9, 24 October 1822, 4.41.17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 26 April, 7, 10, 13 and 25 June, 3 August 1825, 4.116.48, 12 May 1829, 4.258.48, 50, 22 February, 18 April 1837, T. Babington to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.32.52, 14 July 1824, 4.177.28, 30, 11 January, 30 March 1832, J. W. Cunningham to T. Chalmers; 4.156.47, 15 July 1831, F. Cunningham to T. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 4.223.87, 12 April 1834, J.G. Gurney to T. Chalmers.

and alleviate their spiritual and material conditions.¹ Another of Gurney's sisters, Hannah married Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton (1786-1845), yet another leading philanthropist who was also the M.P. for Weymouth from 1818 to 1837. Buxton was connected by marriage to the Cunningham brothers. He was also linked with Wilberforce and Macaulay in the anti-slavery movement, and developed a concern for the education and social improvement of the poor. He was another useful contact for Chalmers, as were the physician and later poor law commissioner Sir James Philip Kay-Shuttleworth (1804-1877), the educationalist Thomas Arnold (1795-1842), and the Irish Whig M.P. Thomas Spring Rice (1790-1866) who was in charge of the Irish Poor Law Commission of 1830 and supported many of Chalmers' ideas on poor relief. Interestingly, Arnold urged the Church of England in 1833 to include laymen in its order of deacons to visit the sick, manage charitable subscriptions and share in the clerical duties of the ministers.²

It will be remembered that Chalmers had been influenced by the English political economist T.R. Malthus in his initial thinking on poor relief.³ Interestingly, Malthus in turn later derived support from Chalmers. He repeatedly stated his agreement with Chalmers' poor relief principles, was impressed by The Christian and Civic Economy, and was convinced that the St. John's experiment had proved his and

1. C.P., CHA 5.4.16, 8 October 1818, Sir George Grey to T. Chalmers; 3.14.84, 18 September 1834, T. Chalmers to E. Fry; 4.222.73, ?, 1834; E. Fry to T. Chalmers.

2. St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.803, 18 February 1832, T. Chalmers to T.F. Buxton; C.P., CHA 4.265.62, 13 December 1837, 4.283.40, 14 August 1839, 4.229.34, 5 June 1841, 4.324.62, 29 August 1846, Sir J.P. Kay-Shuttleworth to T. Chalmers; 4.222.44, 28 March 1834, E. Fletcher to T. Chalmers; 4.147.2, 26 March 1830, 4.147.4, n.d., 4.168.53, 26 April 1837, T.S.Rice to T. Chalmers; D. Roberts, Paternalism in Early Victorian England (Rutgers, New Jersey, 1979), p. 50.

3. See above, pp. 31-2.

the respective agencies, much may be done to diminish the ignorance and juvenile depravity which so extensively prevail. This can only be effected by religious instruction, but immediate attention to their common education is indispensable to their being prepared to receive a Christian education which is the greater ulterior end we have in view.¹

The implications for the survival of the poor relief experiment that the funding for this secular education held will be considered in the next chapter alongside a general financial assessment of the parochial affairs. What this section on education has indicated is that the personnel and desire to carry out Chalmers' parochial principles in education were as evident as they had been in the case of the elders and deacons. Whether they had unqualified success is once more debatable. The fact that the Chalmers Street Infant School had problems that were openly admitted to as regards reaching the young around it, and the 1839 printed statements, would once more indicate that many St. John's parishioners were still outside the influence of the parochial educational machinery - as has indeed been the conclusion for the impact of the other sides of the experiment as well. Devotion to duty and a belief in the scheme generally were once more not enough to cover the large city population that St. John's parish covered. It is little wonder that in the 1839 edition of the Christian and Civic Economy Chalmers added a footnote stating that he now believed that without government help, neither Christian nor common education could be provided for.² This fact makes it all the more interesting that he did not reach a similar conclusion on the provision of poor relief. The reasons for this, and the financial result of the poor relief experiment will form the subject of the next chapter.

1. Ibid.

2. T. Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy, vol. 1, C.W., vol. 14, p. 155, footnote.

the failure of Chalmers' plea for permissive legislation to allow his scheme to be gradually introduced. However, it is significant that, despite his objections to the findings of the main report, Tufnell became an administrator of the New Poor Law. Eight years after its introduction he was arguing that it could be used to great advantage:

... as a passage from the old demoralising system to a better one, and in fact completely paving the way to a realisation of the St. John's system, if any clergyman could be found active and zealous enough to make the attempt.¹

It is interesting that at least one other English author, writing in fact two years before the New Poor Law, agreed with this approach. He argued that the extent of English pauperism was too great to attempt to adopt Chalmers' scheme immediately. First of all, a concentrated effort was needed to reform the current system and so, by vigorous administration reduce pauperism by one half or even a third, and then:

... by a very minute subdivision of our parishes, by the appointment of a separate overseer to each small district, by a strict limitation of the amount of compulsory levies for the relief of the poor, and ultimately by a total abolition of them, let us imitate the example which has been set by Dr. Chalmers in Glasgow.²

Not all of Chalmers' supporters agreed with this interpretation of the New Poor Law. One of the most influential converts to his ideas on the subject was another lawyer, Samuel Richard Bosanquet (1800-1882). Although an initial supporter of the 1834 act, Bosanquet came to dislike the way it was carried out at a local level, and was won over to Chalmers' vision of a system based entirely on individual private charity. In 1841 he published a book on the subject, The Rights of the Poor and Christian Almsgiving Undiluted, and wrote telling Chalmers "how much I have derived from and been indebted to

1. C.P.,CHA 4.305.40, 6 July 1842, E.C.Tufnell to T. Chalmers.

2. The British Critic, Quarterly Theological Review, and Ecclesiastical Record, 12 (London, 1832), pp. 456-7.

the volume of your works". This volume was Chalmers' Sufficiency of a Parochial System which Chalmers had sent to him. In it Chalmers had quoted from Bosanquet's writings against "'a law-forced charity'". By the end of 1841 Bosanquet was telling Chalmers that in his position as a landowner and local magistrate he might be able to carry out "your principles with regard to Poor Relief ...practically".¹ Unfortunately it is not known to what extent he actually did so.

Having established that there was a definite support for Chalmers in England the next question to consider is whether in fact there were any clergymen or individuals "active and zealous enough" to actually implement them. Among the clergy, the Bishop of Winchester Charles Richard Sumner (1790-1874) expressed an interest in Chalmers' visitation ideas.² At a local level, individual clergymen in Bristol, Nottingham and Shropshire who had met Chalmers on his 1822 tour wrote in support of his proposals for English poor relief.³ As late as 1841, in Nottingham, one of Chalmers' theological students from Edinburgh also actively promoted his "Parochial System" in the town, where Chalmers had procured him the position of tutor to the children of a Mr. Smith.⁴ These were all general endorsements of aspects of Chalmers' system, but there is also evidence of more

1. D.N.B., vol. 5, pp..413-4; T. Chalmers, Sufficiency of a Parochial System, C.W., vol. 21, pp. 154, 329; C.P., CHA 4.296,43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 29 March, 5 April, 4 October, 2 and 22 November 1841, S.R.Bosanquet to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.301.43, 30 October 1841, C.R. Sumner to T. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 4.9.26, 28, 15 June, 13 November 1818, 4.22.60, 62, 63, 15 July, 12 and 30 September 1822, Dr. J.E. Stock (Bristol) to T. Chalmers; 4.29.50, 19 May 1823, J. Storer (Nottingham) to T. Chalmers; 4.21.74, 14 November 1822, G.N.K. Lloyd (Shropshire) to T. Chalmers.

4. C.P., CHA 4.299.50, 54, 4 June, 20 November 1841, J. Macaulay to T. Chalmers.

detailed attempts to put that system into operation.

One of the areas in which Chalmers' support was concentrated was London. In addition to the general approval of the leaders of the Clapham Sect, some of its members and a number of individual evangelical Londoners were eager to experiment with the extension of parochial machinery in an effort to control poor relief. During the 1822 tour, William Hale, who later became a chaplain to the Bishop of Chester, was one of Chalmers' hosts and supplied him with information on English pauperism. In December, two months after Chalmers had returned to Glasgow, Hale wrote to him of a new London Evangelical Society which proposed to divide the city into districts to be visited "'in Dr. Chalmers' plan'". Hale intended to advise this society since he was particularly interested in the locality principle. He described Chalmers' section on locality in the The Christian and Civic Economy as:

... the Desideratum in this Branch of political economy, and the only thing under the blessing of Providence, which can arrest the progress of Pauperism, and finally destroy it ... ¹

He heartily approved of Chalmers' proposals for the abolition of English pauperism in the second volume of the work, and in 1824 wrote encouragingly to Chalmers of the "progressive advancement through many parts of England" of those proposals. By 1830 he was still optimistic in his belief that with God's guidance:

.. we may be so directed to retrace our steps, and amend our ways - that we may be a reformed and saved people. ²

It is interesting that like Arnold, Hale later wrote on the necessity

1. C.P., CHA 4.20.59, 4 December 1822, W. Hale to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.26.40, 23 August 1823, 4.34.33, 11 October 1824, 4.140.4, 3 December 1830, W. Hale to T. Chalmers.

to include laymen in the office of deacon or sub-deacon in the Church of England, and advocated the importance of such men dealing with the secular side of parochial tasks in the growing towns of England.¹

Again in London, a John Blackburn, secretary of the London Christian Instruction Society, wrote to Chalmers in 1830 describing its activities. This society sounds like the one Hale had informed Chalmers of in 1822, and Blackburn referred to Hale in this letter. By 1830 its aim was still to apply Chalmers' "system of benevolent aggression" as described in The Christian and Civic Economy, and it claimed to have over 1,000 voluntary agents, visiting over 26,000 families in London twice a month. In the severe winter of 1829-30 it had relieved over 1,500 families, and claimed its activities were being copied throughout England by "active Christians".² The sheer size of this society's operations may have been contrary to Chalmers' ideal of small local parochial units operating independently, but it certainly constituted an attempt to apply some of his principles to help the London poor morally, spiritually and materially.

The work of this London society was sustained and indeed copied by other groups in the capital itself and in Liverpool in the 1830's. Their common theme was a belief that they owed their origin to Chalmers' writings and inspiration, and were intent on systematically visiting the poor to provide advice and occasional help.³ One such society in Liverpool was the S.B.C.P. which, it will be remembered, in

1. W. Hale, The Duties of the Deacons and Priests in the Church of England Compared; with suggestions for the Extension of the Order of Deacons, and the Establishment of an order of Sub-Deacons (London, 1850), pp. 6-8, 29-31.

2. C.P., CHA 4.132.38, 20 April 1830, J. Blackburn to T. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 4.205.24, 1 July 1833, T. Frazer to T. Chalmers; 4.2.43.5, 19 August 1835, G.C. Smith to T. Chalmers; 4.252.29, 21 November 1836, J. Leslie to T. Chalmers.

its early years, had proposed similar solutions to the problem of poor relief as Chalmers'. By 1828 Elizabeth Fry was one of its leaders. At a meeting in October of that year, called at her request, it was agreed to appoint a committee to collect information and adopt a plan similar to "Chalmers' Christian and Civic Economy". That is, by a division of labour, every small district was to be supervised by a visitor who would investigate the condition of the poorer classes. The latter would benefit from this contact with the wealthy, be encouraged in "habits of industry", and mendicity would decline and eventually disappear. It was an ambitious project for a city of 20,000 but the committee was sure a "good and well devised plan" along Chalmers' guidelines would help. A similar plan was referred to as having been adopted in Brighton with great success.¹

In addition to this attempt by local societies to implement to some degree Chalmers' blue-print for England's poor relief, there were a few individuals involved directly in the administration of poor relief in the parishes who tried to copy him. They were better placed to actually do something to reduce or remove the dependence on official relief and so implement a movement away from pauperism. Local voluntary societies were only involved in the area of private relief. Zachary Macaulay, yet another leader of the Clapham Sect, was also friendly with Chalmers. He tried to convince parliamentary friends of the suitability of Chalmers' poor relief plans, and privately encouraged their adoption. In 1821 he predicted that Chalmers' Christian and Civic Economy would influence "'the moral destinies of the world'".² By 1822 he was writing to tell Chalmers of his supporters'

1. C.P., CHA 4.99.2, 20 October 1828, W. Scoresby to T. Chalmers.

2. St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.230, 14 August 1821, W. Collins to T. Chalmers.

progress in "'Chalmerizing'" individual places. Once more, the most important aspect of Chalmers' poor relief proposals to these English reformers was his emphasis on dividing towns and parishes into districts and conducting local visitations to establish the precise needs of the inhabitants.

Macaulay referred to T.F. Buxton having carried this out in Cromer near his country residence. In addition, a friend of Macaulay's, W. Dealty had been "completely convinced" by Chalmers' Statement on the Pauperism of Glasgow from the Experience of the Last Eight Years, and was attempting to introduce the system into Clapham using a section of the ecclesiastical structure of the Anglican church, the select vestry, in the way that St. John's had used deacons. In 1827 Dealty himself wrote to Chalmers to tell him that the select vestry was very useful but "it does little if compared with your system at St. John's". However, he did add that at least the Clapham poor rates were not increasing, unlike most of its neighbouring parishes. Macaulay also reported that a similar plan had been begun in Deptford and Brighton.¹ Another project instigated by Macaulay was to get one of his and Chalmers' supporters, George Gow a brewer, a position as the master of a workhouse or overseer of a parish. This he seems to have achieved, and Gow wrote to Chalmers describing his visits to the poor, the maturing of the Clapham plan, and his determination to teach his own sons that "Pauperism is the army ... to fight against".²

1. C.P., CHA 4.8.44, 1818, 4.12.23, 25 March 1819, 4.21.44, 46, 50, 24 January, 22 April, 21 September 1822, Z. Macaulay to T. Chalmers; 4.33.15, 1 November 1824, 4.72.13, 30 June 1827, W. Dealty to T. Chalmers; 4.21.54, 9 November 1822, T.R. Malthus to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.21.44, 24 January 1822, 4.27.30, 25 February 1823, Z. Macaulay to T. Chalmers; 4.20.45, 29 September 1822, 4.74.53, 30 April 1827, G. Gow to T. Chalmers.

In the provinces, an attempt to implement Chalmers' ideas was also taking place. In his parish of Little Massingham in Norfolk, Charles David Brereton conducted experiments in controlling the administration of the poor laws. He referred to the "Anti-christian nature" of the current practice in the countryside of making up labourers' wages out of the poor rates, and cited Chalmers' writings in support of his ideas. He also bemoaned the virtual disappearance of the "parochial system" in England in relation to the administration of poor relief, and compared it unfavourably with Scotland's emphasis on voluntary contributions and their control by the kirk sessions.¹

The rector of Sunderland, Robert Gray, visited Glasgow and met Chalmers in 1822. As a result, he returned to his parish intent on providing more secular and religious education, conducting a parochial survey, "and becoming acquainted with the needs of the people". He planned to use his curates and lay visitors in all this work, taking Chalmers' Christian and Civic Economy as a guide.²

Another follower of Chalmers', the Rev. James Crabb, wrote to him in 1825 to tell him that he had read The Christian and Civic Economy four years before and had become interested in its plans for local parochial work in large towns. His resulting enthusiasm for the idea had led him to leave his then charge of a small town and move to Southampton. There he had set up a team of seventeen female visitors - all of whom were former prostitutes whom he had taken off the

1. G. Kitson Clark, Churchmen and the Condition of England, 1832-1855 (London, 1973), p. 151; C.D. Brereton, Observations on the Administration of the Poor Laws in Agricultural Districts (2nd edn., Norwich, n.d.), pp. 2, 19-20, 118-24; C.P., CHA 4.51.50, 52, 54 57, 59, 7, 20 and 29 June, 8 July, 26 October 1826, C.D. Brereton to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.20.48, 13 March 1822, R. Gray to T. Chalmers.

streets and taught in his own penitentiary. These women visited the poor, ensured the children were clothed and educated, and helped to provide secular and spiritual instruction for the adults as well. Lacking sufficient church accommodation, Crabb preached in people's homes - reminiscent of what Chalmers had done in Glasgow - but needed financial help to continue in his work. Chalmers replied to this letter, recommending he persist in trying to recruit local agents, and sent him a personal donation of one guinea.¹ Obviously, it is difficult to deduce from this to what precise degree Crabb carried out Chalmers' parochial plans and how closely he kept to Chalmers' criteria in his dealings with the poor. However, the desire to do something along these lines had literally altered the course of his career.

A more precise attempt to apply the poor relief side of the St. John's experiment occurred in Norham, in the county of North Durham. William Stephen Gilly became vicar of the parish in 1831. He knew Chalmers personally, and in 1832 sent in a report on the poor relief in his parish along with his replies to a questionnaire sent to parishes throughout England by the Poor Law Commissioners. In that report he told Chalmers that he had cited the good condition of the parish as "an illustration of the Truth of Dr. Chalmers' system". He agreed with Chalmers' emphasis on religious and moral education, and in his answers to the questionnaire he emphasised the advantage of sub-dividing parishes to facilitate an improvement of the poor relief

1. St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.203, 24 December 1825, C.P., CHA 4.54.55, 57, 4 and 30 March 1826, J. Crabb and T. Chalmers.

system generally.¹

One of Chalmers' St. Andrews' students, Herbert Smith, also attempted to introduce his plans for a parochial economy into England. When he had first graduated, in 1825/6, Smith had been unable to find a parochial charge in England. He was not idle, however, but rather helped to establish Sabbath and day schools for poor children. By 1841 he had become chaplain in a Union Workhouse in Hants., and was writing against the New Poor Law in its detrimental effects on those poor who were deserving of relief. Chalmers referred to Smith in his Sufficiency of a Parochial System, and sent a copy of the work to him. Smith was gratified by this present, but added in his letter thanking Chalmers that he had "more fully imbibed your principles than you seem to imagine". He also told Chalmers that he had been active in trying to solicit government support for Chalmers' poor relief system, and agreed completely that voluntary church collections administered by deacons and unfettered by all legal interference should be the aim. His views on using the structure given by the new poor law to improve the current situation and facilitate the introduction of Chalmers' ideal one were similar to those expressed by Tufnell.²

Another member of this second generation of Chalmers' followers who were active in England was the son of Wilberforce, Henry William Wilberforce (1807-1873). He also thought a strict administration of the New Poor Law would facilitate any attempt to introduce Chalmers'

1. J. Raine, The History and Antiquities of North Durham (London, 1852), p. 264; C.P., CHA 4.205.41, 43, 45, 47, 12 and 19 January, 11 March, 7 October 1833, 4.236.56, 1 January 1835, 4.282.48, 26 July 1839, W.S. Gilly to T. Chalmers; P.P. Sess. 1834 (16), App. (B1) Part V, 34, p. 159.

2. T. Chalmers The Sufficiency of a Parochial System, C.W., vol. 21, pp. 153-4; C.P., CHA 4.85.20, 13 January 1827, 4.301.28, 16 October 1841, 4.301.30, 26 November 1841, H. Smith to T. Chalmers.

system, since in a parish like his one in Walmer near Dover in 1841 the extent of pauperism was so great that any attempt to introduce the St. John's experiment without such preparation "could hardly succeed". Again, he was keen to introduce a district visiting team but was not confident of duplicating Chalmers' success in recruiting deacons. He was convinced, however, that something had to be done, and that Chalmers' parochial system with its methods of poor relief administration was the ideal to be aimed for.¹

In addition to the impact of his ideas on poor relief on Anglicans and Scottish Presbyterians living in England, Chalmers' influence on English Dissenters was also strong. The Quaker John J. Gurney and his connections have already been discussed. More particularly, Chalmers' ideas on district visiting and a decentralised poor relief system were welcomed by English Wesleyans. During William Collins' visits to England in 1821 and 1822, he had met some of the leading Methodists in the country. As a result, at a Methodist conference in Manchester, Jabez Bunting proposed that Chalmers' system of locality be introduced in all their stations throughout the country. All approved of the motion.² Bunting had already been in touch with Chalmers that year to tell him that his locality plan had been begun on a small scale in St. Giles and Spitalfields in London. It was its success there that had convinced Bunting that it was the only way to "effectually reach the mass of our ignorant and vicious

1. C.P., CHA 4.305.48, 56, 9 February, 3 March 1842, H.W. Wilberforce to T. Chalmers.

2. St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.230, 14 August 1821, W. Collins to T. Chalmers. That this notion was in fact carried into effect is borne out by other letters Chalmers received, e.g. C.P., CHA 4.23.32, 16 May 1822, 4.40.22, 6 March 1824, J. Reed Wilson to T. Chalmers; 4.23.36, 7 October 1822, the Rev. T. Wood to T. Chalmers.

population".¹ In other words, Bunting's interest in the locality principle was primarily as a tool to reach the souls of the poor. He did not mention any poor relief experiment accompanying a local visiting scheme.

In his letters to Chalmers, Bunting mentioned the involvement of Joseph Butterworth (1770-1826), another Wesleyan. Butterworth was an active philanthropist in England, and was friendly with Wilberforce and Macaulay. He also served as an M.P. His interest in Chalmers' plan of local visitation of the poor in London was more obviously linked with a desire to alleviate the material problems of pauperism than Bunting's had been, and he tried to help Chalmers to promote that object.²

Another Wesleyan who tried to do something more practical about implementing Chalmers' poor relief ideas was an iron manufacturer, Michael Longridge of Bedlington. He became friendly with Chalmers, and corresponded with him from the 1820's until Chalmers' death. In 1826 he wrote to tell Chalmers that he was reading the third volume of The Christian and Civic Economy, and, although too busy at that moment to attend to the pauperism of the parish, he added that he intended to "make an attempt to accomplish here, what you have done in St. John's in Glasgow". By 1830 Longridge was canvassing M.P.s on the subject of poor law reform along Chalmers' principles, and alluded to plans he had for his own parish.³ Longridge did not detail these plans in

1. St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.87, 27 February 1821, J. Bunting to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.19.28, 29, 28 February, 7 September 1822, J. Butterworth to T. Chalmers; St.A.U.L., MS. Bx. 9225.C4E23, MS. 1001, 12 February 1823, T. Chalmers to J. Butterworth.

3. C.P., CHA 4.57.60, 62, 4 September, 10 October 1826, 4.142.9, 27 November 1830, M. Longridge to T. Chalmers.

any surviving letters to Chalmers, but from his evidence before the 1832 Poor Law Commission it is apparent what they were. That is, he assumed the office of overseer of the poor for his parish and served in it for a year. During that time he reduced the expense of the official poor relief by 50%, and he claimed that if he had had the time to continue in the office for two or three more years, it would have declined another 25%. Longridge added that "at last" he was a "convert" to Chalmers' proposal for the complete abolition of the poor laws and the introduction of a system relying solely on private charity, "yet I have no hopes of seeing it reduced in practice in our part of the island". Chalmers' system worked in Scotland, he maintained, because of its "moral machinery" of clergy and elders - a mechanism that was lacking in England.¹

At some point Longridge must have informed Chalmers of his experiment in Bedlington. It is apparent from his later letters to Scotland that Chalmers had replied stating his reservations about Longridge's methods, no matter how good his intentions had been, since they had involved him becoming a part of the existing English relief structure. Chalmers added that he himself did not wish to be involved in any attempts to modify or improve the current English relief system, even if those attempts were based on his principles. He did not outrightly disapprove, but said he did not have the time to make inquiries into individual proposals but left them to the discretion of men living in England and acquainted with each area. He added, however, that:

... after having stated what I hold the pure and absolutely right economy and laid down a way by which it may be carried out without compulsion and without violence, I must forebear the consideration of the question in any other light ... I must decline ... personal co-operation for any object short of a total

1. P.P.Sess. 1834 (19), App. C, vol. 37, pp. 445c-446c.

though ¹very gradual and practicable abolition of the whole system.

Accordingly, Chalmers continued to agitate for legislation to enable English parishes to opt for his system, and in 1841 was still canvassing support for such a scheme. ²

This uncompromising approach on Chalmers' part had also been typical of his work in St. John's and his written assessments of its accomplishments. Despite it, individuals like Longridge, Tufnell, Smith and Wilberforce remained convinced of the inherent correctness of Chalmers' basic poor relief principles, and were obviously working towards a situation which they hoped would ultimately enable them to implement those principles to their fullest extent. Their success, on Chalmers' terms, was very limited, and yet in their writings and activity in the field they were helping to perpetuate Chalmers' belief in the sufficiency of voluntary charity, operating on a local and individual level and accompanied by efforts to elevate the labouring poor morally and spiritually as well as materially. By disassociating himself from such piecemeal efforts Chalmers was doing himself an injustice. The power of his arguments was to be transmitted by such converts to subsequent generations of philanthropists and the resulting work of such organisations as the Charity Organisation in the late 1860's owed much to them. ³

From all the above it is apparent that Chalmers' poor relief

1.C.P., CHA 3.11.62, 7 December 1830, T. Chalmers to M. Longridge. Longridge continued to support Chalmers, and gave generous financial contributions to the Free Church and the West Port project: C.P., CHA 3.17.62, 108, 116, 5 July 1843, 1 December 1845, 1846, T. Chalmers to M. Longridge, 4.318.57, 29 November 1845, M. Longridge to T. Chalmers.

2. Brown, Chalmers, p. 295; N.L.S., MS. 1766/91, 29 September 1841, T. Chalmers to T. Carlyle.

3. See below, p. 407.

theories had a significant impact in England. As had happened in Scotland, they fitted into an already-existing anti-assessment trend, which in England was tantamount to being against the poor laws themselves since the practice of assessment was nearly universal. The situation also meant that it would be more difficult to introduce Chalmers' plans. Those of Chalmers' disciples who went the step beyond the theory in an attempt to implement his formula for the regeneration of the English system did not get very far. Although it would appear that they were highly successful in encouraging the division of towns and cities into small districts for the purpose of visiting and so went some way towards establishing the moral and spiritual apparatus necessary for Chalmers' parochial experiments, the task of overcoming so much tradition and practice of compulsory charity on the whole proved insurmountable.

Another part of Britain that attracted Chalmers' concern for a while was Ireland. This was in part the result of his desire to ensure that the English poor law was not extended to cover Ireland as well, which was a suggestion in the second decade of the century as poverty in Ireland intensified. Chalmers' evidence before the 1830 Irish Poor Law Commission was indicative of his recognition as an authority on the subject by the Whig Government, and in particular on the part of Thomas Spring Rice, the Whig M.P. for Limerick. In his answers to the Commission's questions, Chalmers emphasised once more the devastating impact a public relief system had on a nation's morality and economy. Instead, he recommended a system of national education for Ireland: once people lived moral lives they would be economically self-sufficient.¹ Chalmers' overall impact on the

1. T. Chalmers, Evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons on the Subject of a Poor Law for Ireland, C.W., vol. 16, especially, pp. 365-72.

Commission's findings, however, and on subsequent legislation for Ireland was not great. Indeed, by 1838 the New English Poor Law of 1834 was extended across the Irish Sea. Once more, as had been the case in Scotland and England, when it came to actual legislation Chalmers' ideas were not quite convincing enough to risk their universal enactment by law.

In Ireland itself it had already been seen that Chalmers' locality principles had a significant impact, particularly in relation to the organisation of sabbath schools.¹ Such societies were also supported by the father of Chalmers' future son-in-law, the Belfast minister Samuel Hanna. There were several other references to Chalmers' "localising plan" being tried in other parts of Ireland. More directly, some of Chalmers' wealthy Scottish female benefactors became interested in the increasingly notorious poverty of their sister island and supported their Irish counterparts in setting up local visiting groups aimed at improving the physical and moral condition of the poor.²

There is some indication that Chalmers' poor relief theories were attractive to a few Irishmen. Both in Dublin and Belfast he had "staunch disciples" who were against any compulsory legal provision for relief as "artificial", and in favour of the working classes being encouraged to carry out their Christian duty of helping friends and

1. See above, pp. 183 and 184, footnote 1.

2. St. A.U.L., MS. 30385.404, 3 April 1818, S. Hanna to T. Chalmers; C.P., CHA 4.21.3, 18 June 1822, R. Murray to T. Chalmers; 4.39.34, 11 September 1824, Sunday School Society for Ireland to T. Chalmers; 4.24.51, 53, 56, 13 February, 6 March, 1 May 1823, 4.53.9, 21 January 1826, Lady Agnes Murray Carnegie to T. Chalmers.

relatives in need.¹ There were also a few direct attempts to implement the details of St. John's. For example, in Combee, a John Andrews wrote to tell Chalmers that visitors had been appointed in the parish and were acting "to some extent" along the guidelines of the St. John's deacons. Their job was to visit, inquire, and ensure that it was very difficult to obtain money from the church poor funds. However, Andrews was not optimistic of the likelihood of the adoption of Chalmers' plan throughout the country. For one thing, enforcing a law of settlement would be very difficult. In addition, in areas of turf bogs in particular the numbers of poor were so great "their poor neighbours could not support them", and in large towns like Belfast it would be very difficult to carry out such a system.²

It was in Belfast, however, that an attempt was made as late as 1846 to divide the town up along district and parochial lines, provide visitors of the poor, and to increase the provision of pastoral care and leadership.³ In addition, some of Chalmers' students in St. Andrews and in Edinburgh were from Ireland, and were influenced by his teachings on parochial machinery.⁴ Unfortunately, the outcome of the Belfast experiment is unknown, but on the whole it would appear that although some Protestant ministers and interested Scottish benefactors were keen to implement Chalmers' general parochial system in Ireland, the end result of their efforts, in relation to poor relief, does not appear to have been very great.

It has already been indicated that as early as the 1780's an

1. C.P., CHA 4.134.27, 26 April 1830, J. Carlile to T. Chalmers; 4.219.1, 19 March 1834, R.J. Bryce to T. Chalmers; 4.276.7, 13 December 1838.

2. C.P., CHA 4.116.10, 1 July 1829, J. Andrews to T. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 4.325.14, 4 June 1846, J. Morgan to T. Chalmers.

4. For example, C.P., CHA 4.86.62, 25 August 1827, W. Toland to T. Chalmers; 4.123.28, 9 June 1829, C. Lane to T. Chalmers.

experiment in poor relief had taken place in Hamburg which concentrated on district visiting, rigorous investigation, and encouraging the poor to find work.¹ There was a similar movement in Munich, inspired by an American, Count Rumford, who emphasised the necessity of encouraging the poor to be independent and condemned the demoralising effects of an official poor relief system.² It is apparent that Chalmers had been at least aware of Von Voght's Hamburg experiment, and debatable whether the district visiting idea by middle class agents in St. John's was inspired by it as well as the traditional role of deacon in the reformed churches. This does not mean that his entire system was derivative. His particular use of the church, and more significantly his forceful publicising of the benefits of the parochial unit in the reform of the poor and the reduction of pauperism was unique to his own experiment and to the situation he had found in Glasgow. The Hamburg and Munich experiences, however, give an indication of similar problems confronting European towns generally in this period.

As Chalmers' fame spread, some of his works were translated into French, Dutch and German, and disseminated to an increasingly wider audience on the continent. The early nineteenth century witnessed a growing number of links between British and continental evangelicals, particularly with Geneva. As one of the leaders of the British contingent, Chalmers was in the forefront of 'ambassadors' to meet and converse with evangelical leaders from France, Switzerland and Germany.³

1. See above, p. 119, footnote 1.

2. Poynter, *op.cit.*, p. 88.

3. T. Stunt, 'Geneva and British Evangelicals in the Early 19th Century', The Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 32 (Jan. 1981), pp. 35-46.

There is some evidence that such visitors to Britain were not only interested in the religious experiences of Chalmers and his fellow evangelicals, but also in Chalmers' thoughts on political economy generally and poor relief in particular. For example, in 1822 Dr. and Mrs. Mercet from Geneva arrived in Glasgow with an introductory letter to Chalmers from Zachary Macaulay. In 1816 Mrs. Mercet had published a simplified edition of Malthus' and Ricardo's ideas entitled Conversations on Political Economy. By 1839 it was to run into six editions. Macaulay said she wanted to talk to Chalmers and see his political economy in practice in St. John's. He added that he was sure she and her husband would be valuable advocates of "the Cause" in circles where he and Chalmers had no access.¹ Another Swiss representative, Baron de Strandeman from Bern, was specifically interested in poor relief. He visited Chalmers in Scotland in 1817 and on his return through Paris had reported some of Chalmers' ideas on the subject of relief to some French "charitable persons". He wrote and told Chalmers that before he had left Paris Chalmers' works had been ordered, and were going to be translated into French.² Chalmers was also interested to gather reciprocal material on the operation of poor relief abroad, for his own information and as evidence in support of his theories.³

This evidence does not amount to a great deal. If anything, it

1. C.P., CHA 4.21.48, 13 June 1822, Z. Macaulay to T. Chalmers; Poynter, op. cit., p. 238 ff.

2. C.P., CHA 4.9.32, 23 April 1818, Baron de Strandeman to T. Chalmers.

3. C.P., CHA 3.10.104, 16 November 1826, T. Chalmers to M.M. Biot (Biot wrote on French pauperism); 4.190.12, 10 October 1832, Sir John Sinclair to T. Chalmers (concerning a German professor, Dr. Cantor, who had information on the continental poor laws).

indicated a desire on the part of some western Europeans to compare their experiences in the face of urban growth. One particular aspect of the St. John's experiment did come in for special attention, however. That was its educational apparatus. Apparently, in June 1833 the French government passed an act to establish 40,000 commune/parochial schools in France, their main aim being the increase of moral and religious instruction. A Mr. Wallace was sent as a representative of the French Government to investigate the results of Scotland's renowned moral and religious parochial machinery. William Collins met Wallace in Glasgow, and wrote a letter of introduction for him to Chalmers in which he urged the latter to reinforce all the advantages of the St. John's parochial schooling system that Collins had been at pains to point out. Collins had also presented Wallace with copies of several of Chalmers' works, including The Christian and Civic Economy. Matthew Montgomerie, the St. John's elder, also met Wallace and helped show him around the parish schools. Wallace was reported as having greatly approved of them.¹

A more obviously direct impact of Chalmers' ideas, leading on to several attempts to put his theories into practice, took place on the other side of the Atlantic. One method proposed in early nineteenth century Britain for relieving the glut in the labour market was to encourage individuals to move on to another skill or to another country better able to use their labour productively. The idea of emigration as one way of alleviating pressure on the labour market and so lightening the potential poor relief burden was also expressed by

1. C.P., CHA 4.202.34, 2 October 1834, W. Collins to T. Chalmers; 4.201.66, 16 December 1833, J. Chalmers to T. Chalmers; 4.210.42, 18 October 1833, M. Montgomerie to T. Chalmers; 4.218.8, 16 August 1834, J.H. Auld to T. Chalmers.

Chalmers.¹ Two of the countries that attracted such "surplus" population from mainland Britain and from Ireland, were the United States of America and Canada. The remainder of this chapter will be taken up with the impact of those immigrants and of Chalmers' ideas in America in particular.

This move to emigrate was particularly marked in the early nineteenth century, in the wake of the Napoleonic wars and the subsequent acute economic depressions which prompted many individuals to decide to seek their livelihood outside Britain. Unfortunately, precise records were not kept until later in the century, but by 1850 there were 70,550 Scottish-born people in the United States, with over 3,000 having arrived between 1820 and 1830.² Although more Scots emigrated to Canada in this period, there was also a very close link between America and Scotland. Aspinwall has demonstrated this in his study of the shared cultural, philosophical and philanthropic heritage linking the two nations. He also reveals a surprisingly high number of Americans visiting Scotland, and going to Glasgow in particular to

1. B. Aspinwall, Portable Utopia, Glasgow and the United States. 1820-1920 (Aberdeen, 1984), pp. 7, 246; Chalmers did add that a scheme to promote emigration would only be effective if linked with a retracing system of poor relief: T. Chalmers, 'On Emigration', Quarterly Journal of Agriculture (1828-9), pp. 155-66; C.W., vol. 16, pp. 387-8; Kirkman Finlay was active in the Glasgow Emigration Society, and by 1821 there were reputed to be thirty-five Emigration Societies in Lanarkshire alone: 4.123.53, 2 April 1829, J. Little to T. Chalmers; one of Chalmers' ex-deacons from St. John's, Edward Walkinshaw, moved to Liverpool where he too was active in promoting emigration, with government help, to Australia in particular, 4.217.10, 26 February 1833, E. Walkinshaw to T. Chalmers.

2. R.K. Vedder and L.E. Galloway, 'The Geographical Distribution of British and Irish Emigrants to the United States after 1800', Scottish Journal of Political Economy, 19 (1972), pp. 19-35; L. Dallas Jones, III, 'The Background and Motives of Scottish Emigration to the United States of America in the Period 1815-1861, with special reference to Emigrant Correspondence' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1970), pp. 102-4, 402-6.

investigate and compare notes upon the problems and issues facing them both in the nineteenth century: urbanisation, education, drink and poor relief.

The arrival of immigrant ships in such ports as Boston and New York created problems of its own, both for the immigrants who in many cases had left with such high hopes, and for the local port authorities. The difficulty of providing work and shelter and the other necessities of life created many headaches for government officials. This was compounded by the fact that there was already a crisis in such eastern towns and cities as New York, Albany, Boston, Baltimore and Philadelphia as a result of rapid urbanisation and the beginnings of industrialisation.¹ The response of ministers of religion and philanthropists in three of these five areas to the problems of poor relief in particular substantiate Aspinwall's claim that Thomas Chalmers' work in Glasgow and the impact of his writings in America were "decisive in awakening Christian conscience to urban deprivation".² More than that, however, was owed to Chalmers. In many cases, the practical responses to the problem of providing relief were directly taken from Chalmers' ideas, the leading men involved being in communication with him and openly attributing their work to his inspiration. Moreover, as had happened in England, there is evidence of a section of opinion favourable to the reception of Chalmers' ideas existing prior to Chalmers' work in St. John's. This last section of the thesis will be concerned with tracing these links,

1.. R. Mohl, Poverty in New York: 1783-1825 (New York, 1971): Blanche D. Coll, 'The Baltimore Society for the Prevention of Pauperism, 1820-1822', The American Historical Review 56 (October 1955), pp. 77-78; J.K. Alexander, Render them Submissive, Responses to Poverty in Philadelphia, 1760-1800 (Amherst, 1980); B. Gratton, 'Joseph Tuckerman and the Creation of the Social Work Apparatus', American Historical Association Paper (1980).

2. Aspinwall, op. cit., p. 52.

in the process revealing yet again a general pattern of response which, although as in England was not universal, demonstrates the existence of a very powerful common school of thought existing on both sides of the Atlantic.

The most striking impression gained from reading the correspondence between Chalmers and individual Americans is the large and varied group of the Scotsman's admirers. Leaving aside for the moment communications to and from Chalmers specifically about poor relief, there is evidence of a general and almost cult-like following existing in America. A good number of Americans who visited Britain made their way to see him in Glasgow, Edinburgh or even tracking him down to Burntisland where he often went during the summer in the 1830's and 1840's.¹ His advice as a Protestant leader was obviously welcomed and valued by Protestant clergy and laity in America, especially in such matters as church government and education where America differed so greatly from Scotland in its lack of an established church and its secular state education. For American Protestants working within that framework - many of whom were Scottish themselves or of Scottish descent - it was comforting to seek the opinion of such a renowned leader or to entrust their sons to his superintendence if they had sent them to Scotland for part of their

1. C.P., CHA 4.6.46, 15 November 1817, G. Scriba to T. Chalmers; 4.245.29, 7 October 1836, W. Appleton to T. Chalmers; 4.247.69, 7 May 1836, J. Codman to T. Chalmers; 4.251.79, 26 May 1836, J.W. Kimball to T. Chalmers; 4.265.98, 27 September 1837, C. Lowell to T. Chalmers; 4.269.61, 10 May 1837, W.B. Sprague to T. Chalmers; 4.269.96, 4 April 1837, J.M. Wainwright to T. Chalmers; 4.283.32, 34, 31 January, 8 June 1839, J. Johnston to T. Chalmers; 4.297.55, 22 November 1841, S.H. Cox to T. Chalmers; Scriba, Kimball, Sprague and Cox all wrote frequently to Chalmers over the years.

education.¹

Chalmers' published works also gained great popularity in America. Many were re-printed there, some editions appearing as early as 1817 and running into three or four editions by the time of his death.² By 1836 one correspondent claimed that Chalmers' writings were being read by tens of thousands, existed in all public and private libraries, and excerpts were being printed in the school books.³ While it is difficult to ascertain the validity of such a claim, there is no doubt that a considerable number of Americans were reading and being profoundly effected by such works as the Evidences of Christianity, the Astronomical Discourses and The Application of Christianity to the Commercial and Ordinary Affairs of Life.⁴ In turn, some of those individuals gave financial help to Chalmers and

1. C.P., CHA 4.30.19, 15 November 1823, P.M. Whelplay to T. Chalmers; 4.163.32, 5 November 1831, A. McLay to T. Chalmers; 4.297.55, 22 November 1841, S.H. Cox to T. Chalmers; 4.283.32, 34, 31 January, 8 June 1839, J. Johnston to T. Chalmers; 4.6.25, 8 August 1817, 4.12.8, 2 June 1819, J. Laird to T. Chalmers; 4.12.2, 2 June 1819, R. Keith to T. Chalmers; 4.12.52, 2 June 1819, J. Mason to T. Chalmers; see above, pp. 73, 78.

2. Two editions of the Evidences and one of the Astronomical Discourses were published in 1817: 4.6.42, 25 July 1817, J.H. Rice to T. Chalmers; 4.6.25, 8 August 1817, J. Laird to T. Chalmers; The National Union Catalogue contains a large number of references to Chalmers' works printed in America, both before and after his death. In addition to several compendium editions published in 1822, three in the 1830's, and four in the 1840's in Hartford, Philadelphia, and New York, many editions of his religious writings were also produced. In relation to poor relief, The Application of Christianity was printed in Boston, Hartford, and New York in 1821; On Political Economy appeared in New York in 1832, and two editions in Columbus, Ohio in 1833 and 1842.

3. C.P., CHA 4.246.74, 4 March 1836, E.H. Burritt to T. Chalmers.

4. There are a good number of references to the impact of Chalmers' works and his general reputation on individual Americans: for example 4.13.26, 14 August 1819, 4.147.1, 23 August 1830, J.H. Rice to T. Chalmers; 4.8.30, 11 September 1818, the Rev. Dr. H. Kollock to T. Chalmers; 4.26.52, 20 October 1823, J.D. Hunter to T. Chalmers; 4.57.40, 29 December 1826, J. Joyce to T. Chalmers; 4.241.71, 12 June 1835, A. Potter to T. Chalmers; 4.312.63, April 1844, L. Coleman to T. Chalmers.

the Church of Scotland, and later the Free Church. Most notable among these was James Lennox (1800-1880), a New York merchant and philanthropist.¹

Over and above this evidence for Chalmers' general popularity and influence, Chalmers had a direct impact on American poor relief and practice. Interestingly, two Englishmen were also keen for Chalmers' ideas to be publicised in America. Robert Barclay, a London brewer, sent several copies of Chalmers' writings on pauperism to American friends to help them in "arresting the progress of compulsory relief there, where it was commencing". Another Londoner, Samuel Charles Wilks, was keen for Chalmers to interest himself in the subject of American pauperism, and sent him some reports of the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism (S.P.P.) in New York in an attempt to gain Chalmers' attention on the subject.² Chalmers never did personally promote his St. John's system in the States, which makes its impact there all the more remarkable. One of the first areas where attention was paid to his plans was in the New York Society mentioned by Wilks, and it is New York that will be looked at first.

In the first two decades of the nineteenth century New York witnessed an alarming growth of pauperism, drunkenness and crime alongside its rapid urbanisation and the beginnings of industrialisation. By 1830 its population was about 130,000. Alongside the official state charities, many voluntary bodies run by

1. Lennox gave considerable sums towards Chalmers' church extension projects, the Free Church, and the West Port: C.P., CHA 4.229.42, 43, 27 January, 18 December, 1841, 4.309.29, 33, 4 July, 30 December 1843, 4.314.19, 21, 14 September, 21 November 1844, 4.318.44, 51, 53, 29 January, 30 May, 25 September 1845, 4.324.76, 78, 28 October, 15 December 1846, 4.329.30, 26 January 1847, J. Lennox to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.22.41, 14 August 1822, Sir J. Sinclair to T. Chalmers; 4.23.29, 1 October 1822, S.C. Wilks to T. Chalmers.

middle class merchants and professionals arose. Mohl has detected a decided shift in emphasis in such groups away from simple benevolence towards an attitude of "moral stewardship" during this period. As was happening in Scotland and England at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, there was a school of thought among many of these middle classes "raised intellectually on the classical liberalism" of Malthus, Ricardo and Colquhoun who believed many of society's problems were due to the dilution of the moral apparatus that operated efficiently in small communities and was backed by an efficient educational system and the church. Therefore, it was argued, reform people's characters and their material well-being would also improve. The reponse of simply increasing the total amount of official charity available, and hence the number of paupers, was believed to simply intensify the problem by encouraging the poor in the increasingly anonymous cities to rely on such safeguards and sink into idleness, irreligion and immorality as opposed to their own hard work and morally upright lives. Even private charity doled out by voluntary societies and individuals was not being given with discrimination. One reformer estimated that nearly one sixth of New York's population was receiving such relief.¹

Prominent among the leaders of such arguments against the current modes of giving relief was a group of three men who in December 1817 founded the S.P.P. in New York. Two of the three were Quakers - Thomas Eddy (1758-1827), an insurance broker and investor, and John Griscom (1774-1852), a teacher and chemist, The third, John Pintard (1759-?) a merchant and banker, was also involved in the New York and American Bible Societies. All three had been influenced by

1. Mohl, op. cit., pp. ix, 241, 243, 244, 258, 259, 261-3.

developments in poor relief further south. Earlier in 1817 the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Economy had been established in Philadelphia. It advocated a scientific survey of poverty carried out through local district visiting, and campaigned for better education of the poor.¹ This approach in itself appears to have been the product of developments in Philadelphia in the eighteenth century, when efforts were made to ensure that public and private aid only went to the deserving poor, and to reform the poor through a wise administration of all poor relief. Interestingly, there was also a strong Quaker influence behind the formation of these attitudes in Philadelphia.²

The first of the three New York residents behind the S.P.P. was Thomas Eddy. He was particularly influenced by Patrick Colquhoun's Treatise on Indigence of 1806, and indeed corresponded with Colquhoun extensively. It will be remembered from chapter one that Colquhoun spoke out against indiscriminate charity, emphasised the unworthy causes of pauperism, and advocated the improvement of the lower classes through education and by encouraging them to save in well-organised state savings banks. Colquhoun's influence on Eddy was apparent in the New York S.P.P., particularly in its listing of individual classes or types of poor.³

Chalmers' influence was apparent in the second of the New York reformers, John Griscom. Griscom travelled to Europe in 1818-19, during which time he visited Chalmers in Glasgow. He was particularly struck by Chalmers' ideas concerning Glasgow's poor relief problems

1. Ibid., pp. 244, 263.

2. Alexander, op. cit., pp. 120-1, 140-1.

3. See above, p. 3; and Mohl, op. cit., pp. 245, 254.

and with his plans for St. John's,¹ and brought these back with him to New York. A combination of these influences from Chalmers and Colquhoun helped to mould the New York society in its early years. Griscom in particular emphasised the need for close investigation of all applicants, to be followed up by detailed surveys and local visiting. The poor were to be encouraged by a team of middle class visitors to help themselves. In this way it was hoped ultimately to abolish most public relief, co-ordinating its work with the New York Bible Society and the Sunday Schools Union Society, and so stem the flood of "'artificial'" dependency.² The parallels with St. John's are obvious.

The link between Chalmers' theories and practice in St. John's with the New York S.P.P. becomes even more apparent when surviving letters to him from America are examined. One of the letters of introduction Griscom took with him on his visit to Glasgow was from John M. Mason (1770-1829), a minister in the Associate Church in New York. Mason had also been to Europe and had met Chalmers in England in 1817. In his letter of April 1818 he informed Chalmers of the formation of the New York S.P.P., Griscom's role in it, and its emphasis on the "intellectual and moral cultivation of the poor". He added:

... correct principles on the subject of Poor Laws, and of Pauperism in general are gaining ground rapidly in America; ... and that the₃ favourable impression is under no small obligation to your pen.

Griscom also wrote to Chalmers about his work with the poor. In March 1820 he reported on the progress of the S.P.P. and its intention

1. See above, p. 128.

2. Mohl, op. cit., pp. 245-7, 249.

3. C.P., CHA 4.8.49, 4 April 1818, J. M. Mason to T. Chalmers.

to "district" the city and inaugurate a system of "careful inspection of the habits and conditions of the poor." He openly acknowledged his and the other founders' obligation to Chalmers' "skill and zeal" in this subject. Despite its influential leadership the New York Society had little impact on the legislature, however, and failed in its attempts to bring about the abolition of official relief. By 1825 it had switched its emphasis to education, and this was reflected in Griscom's second letter to Chalmers, in 1836, where he wrote that he had kept up with all of Chalmers' publications and described his continuing work in education in New York.¹

It would be wrong to suggest that this attempt in New York to abolish pauperism was purely in response to Chalmers' theories alone. As has been seen, Colquhoun's ideas were also influential, as were developments in Philadelphia. The end product in New York was a society born of a combination of influence and a variety of needs existing in the city. Having said that, there is no doubt that one very strong factor in the formation of the S.P.P. and in its proposals was Chalmers' work and writings concerning the relief of the poor. Griscom does not appear to have developed a philosophical analysis of the nature of charity as Chalmers had done, but his emphasis on surveys, visiting, and moral and religious education was a product of his acquaintance with Chalmers' writings and with his work in Glasgow.

Just as the New York S.P.P. had looked to developments in Philadelphia, it was copied in its turn by concerned philanthropists in Baltimore. In the early nineteenth century Baltimore was the third largest city in America with a population of 63,000. It too was

1. C.P., CHA 4.15.41, 5 March 1830, 4.251.12, 16 May 1836, J. Griscom to T. Chalmers; Mohl, op. cit., pp. 255-7.

undergoing a crisis in its poor relief provision in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars when its dependence upon commerce had resulted in a general depression.¹ As a result of all these factors the Baltimore S.P.P. was consitituted at a public meeting on 6 March 1820. Like the New York one, it emphasised the need to educate and elevate the poor, and to make them self-sufficient and virtuous. Likewise, it was mainly run by middle and upper class merchants and professionals, and ministers from various churches. Their aims were to be accomplished by a strict regime of visiting.²

The Baltimore S.P.P. was a logical culmination of the reasoning behind various voluntary private charitable societies which had originated in the city in the post-Napoleonic years. Coll points to the influence of the Hamburg system of district visiting and encouragement to work and of Thomas Chalmers' work in Glasgow on the ideals of individual men active in all these societies in Baltimore. Indeed, it was a stated aim of the S.P.P. in Baltimore to distinguish between the worthy and unworthy poor - assisting the one and reforming the other. It even referred to exercising a "'moral police'" - language reminiscent of the St. John's agents. Like the New York S.P.P., however, it failed to gain effective legislation to abolish and so prevent pauperism, and it petered out in 1822.³ Although unsuccessful it was yet another example of the far-flung impact of Chalmers' theories and an attempt to put those theories into practice.

A similar movement to abolish most public assistance and so privatise poor relief existed in Albany, in the state of New York.

1. Coll, 'op. cit.', p.78.

2. The Baltimore American and Commercial Daily Advertiser, 9 March 1820, under 'Communicated'.

3. Coll, 'op. cit.', pp. 80-1, 84-7.

Mohl refers to a public leader of that town addressing a meeting in February 1823 and stating that "'the effectual way to make poor people, was, to provide for poor people'".¹ The next year a merchant from Albany wrote to Chalmers to tell him about a plan sanctioned by the state legislators to "support without increasing the poor", and to educate poor children. He asked for Chalmers' advice for such a programme.² Unfortunately, if Chalmers ever replied his letter has not so far come to light.

The final city to be considered in this section is Boston. Like New York, Boston was attracting large numbers of British, particularly Irish, immigrants in the first half of the nineteenth century, and was also suffering from similar social problems. Similarly, in the 1820's, a society aimed at reforming the poor was established - the Society for the Moral and Religious Instruction of the Poor.³ One of Boston's most illustrious inhabitants, Lewis Tappan (1788-1873), wrote to Chalmers to tell him about its progress. Tappan was later to become famous for his fight against slavery in America, but in these early decades of the century he was more concerned with reforming the increasingly "'wasteful and vicious habits'" of the Boston inhabitants, many of whom were crowded into slums and in daily contact with crime, drink and poverty.⁴ His solution was to encourage the

1. Mohl, op. cit., quoted p. 249.

2. St.A.U.L., MS. 30385.207, 25 March 1824, J. Chester to T. Chalmers.

3. Mohl, op. cit., p. 263.

4. B. Wyatt-Brown, Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War against Slavery (New York, 1971), p. 21.

secular and religious education of these poor classes of society. In 1822 he was as yet personally unknown to Chalmers, but wrote to tell him that he had read the first volume of The Christian and Civic Economy, and had ordered the second and third volumes to be shipped out to him. He added that a plan was in the offing "to commence the system of local visitation in this city" and asked Chalmers how that system was working out in Glasgow.¹ Once more it is unfortunate that Chalmers' reply is unknown.

The next known contact between Chalmers and Boston in connection with poor relief was through the person of Joseph Tuckerman (1778-1840). Tuckerman was a native of Boston, and became a Unitarian minister there. He visited Europe in 1816, and again in 1833-4 when he stayed in Glasgow for a while. Like the New York reformers, he was influenced both by Colquhoun and Chalmers. In 1833 he had founded the Association of Delegates from the Benevolent Societies of Boston, and in May 1834, while visiting Scotland, he arranged to meet Chalmers.² On his return to Boston he was instrumental in forming the Boston Society for the Prevention of Pauperism. Once more the dislike of public and legal relief in encouraging pauperism and immorality was apparent in its constitution. Tuckerman also emphasised the need to visit and advise the poor and so encourage their self-reliance.³ At least two American historians have seen in

1. C.P., CHA 4.23.4, 18 May 1822, L. Tappan to T. Chalmers; Tappan visited Britain in 1840 and tried to see Chalmers, but he was out of the city: 4.299.38, 1 July 1841, J.W. Kimball to T. Chalmers.

2. C.P., CHA 4.229.76, May 1834, J. Tuckerman to T. Chalmers.

3. W.E. Channing, The Centennial Edition of the Completed Works of W.E. Channing (London, 1880), pp. 478, 485, 487-8.

this work the origins of modern American social case-work - as was to be attributed to Chalmers in Britain.¹

Three years after Tuckerman had written to Chalmers, another Boston minister involved in the society's work, Charles Francis Bernard contacted Chalmers. Bernard's ministry was specifically involved with the poor of the city, and referred to Chalmers as the man to whom he was "more indebted ... than to any other earthly teacher". As regards the poor relief work afoot in Boston, Bernard was optimistic:

Public attention is directed to the subject. The people are in advance of our eleemosynary establishments or our pauper legislation ... remedial and preventive measures are beginning to assume their true place with us.²

Like Chalmers and the American reformers, Bernard emphasised the importance of moral, and particularly Christian influences, and their slow but steady remedy for the problem of poor relief. He praised Chalmers' work in Glasgow as significant for the whole world:

You made the church, what it should be, a centre of social reform, an advanced post of civilization. Would that every clergyman, respected Sir, were treading in your footsteps.³

Thus once more it is apparent that Chalmers' influence on poor relief attitudes and practices did indeed stretch beyond the confines of Glasgow and Scotland. Like the latter country, there is evidence for a movement in America sympathetic to the principles Chalmers was to elucidate existing before that Scottish minister had begun to

1. Gratton, 'op. cit.'; F. Watson, The Charity Organisation Movement in the United States of America (New York, 1922), pp. 27, 33-7, 57, 132, 175; see below, p. 407.

2. C.P., CHA 4.258.85, 9 January 1837, C.F. Bernard to T. Chalmers.

3. Ibid.

preach and work extensively on the subject. Once more, it was not a question of precise imitations of the St. John's experiment, but through Chalmers' printed works, his widespread reputation and contact with a large and varied audience his theories on poor relief were well-known across the Atlantic. Some of the men interested in those theories were also prepared to attempt to put them into practice, albeit in accordance with their particular situations. In this context, Bernard's praise of Chalmers does not seem too intemperate. Chalmers had indeed helped to put the church at the centre of that sort of social reform that was attractive to many of the middle classes in particular of Europe and America, intent as they were to control the ramifications of industrialisation in its production of a large, mobile and potentially dangerous yet vitally necessary class. Not every clergyman or philanthropist followed Chalmers' footsteps, but this thesis has surely given evidence of a sufficient number to demonstrate that attempts to implement in varying degrees Chalmers' poor relief theories constituted a significant response to the social problems confronting industrialising countries in the first half of the nineteenth century.

CONCLUSION

On 4 June 1847 Chalmers was buried in the Grange cemetery in Edinburgh. Over 2,000 mourners followed the cortege along streets packed by an estimated 100,000 onlookers. It is easy to understand Cockburn's assertion that "the greatest of living Scotchmen" was buried that day.¹ Obviously Chalmers had become to his contemporaries a national figure, loved, revered, and admired by his supporters, and at least respected by those who had opposed him.

In many ways, Cockburn's assessment of Chalmers' life has never been contradicted. Chalmers was a man knowledgeable in a varying number of disciplines - chemistry, mathematics, moral philosophy, political economy and divinity - yet not an original thinker in any of them. Nor was Cockburn blind to Chalmers' tendency to become obsessed with a single idea to the exclusion of all other arguments or information. Yet the overall tone of Cockburn's obituary was one of great praise for Chalmers' courage in being a "liberal churchman" in his attitude towards Dissenters and Catholics at a time when it was not fashionable to be so. Also, Chalmers' loyalty to all things Scottish was extolled, as well as his ability to discern and bring into the open the problems confronting early nineteenth century Scottish society. Most importantly, Cockburn's analysis of Chalmers' central concern with the advancement of "Evangelical religion" has been reiterated by all of Chalmers' subsequent biographers. For Chalmers, this included education, pauperism, religious accommodation, and ecclesiastical rights and policy -

... everything, in short, not purely political, that directly concerned the moral elevation of the people ... but all

1. H. Cockburn, Journal, 1831-51, 2 vols.. (Edinburgh, 1874), vol. 2, p. 180.

subordinately to the diffusion and maintenance of what he thought vital religion.¹

The main topic this thesis has covered has been Chalmers' particular contribution in the field of poor relief theory and practice during his lifetime, and not an assessment of his career as a whole. The problem with most references to Chalmers' poor relief theories has been their emphasis on a fully developed approach to the problem of pauperism evolved by Chalmers in his Kilmany and early Glasgow days and maintained throughout the remainder of his career.² While it is true that Chalmers' definitions of poverty and pauperism remained static, it has been shown in this thesis that his approach to a solution for their relief and abolition respectively did develop.

Like a good number of his contemporaries, including Cockburn, Chalmers maintained throughout his life that pauperism and immorality were linked, and since Christianity improved people's morals their social condition would also improve as Christianity spread. However, Chalmers also believed that men did not need to be Christian to be moral, and accepted the Enlightenment concept of a natural society with innate moral laws as well as much of Malthus' and Smith's thinking on population and the new economic order. Thus Chalmers concluded that other forces - such as free trade, a free market in labour, savings banks, general education and the good example of Christian visitors and neighbours - were also able to contribute

1. Ibid., pp. 182, 180-88.

2. For example, J. McCaffrey, 'The Life of Thomas Chalmers', in The Practical and the Pious ed. A.C. Cheyne (Edinburgh, 1985), p. 139; R.A. Cage and O.A. Checkland, 'Thomas Chalmers and urban poverty: the St. John's parish experiment in Glasgow, 1819-1837', The Philosophical Journal, 13 (1976), pp. 37-56.

towards a well-ordered, moral and therefore pauper-free society. It was this combination of ideas and influences that both contributed to the development of his solutions for poor relief and introduced a tension in his arguments and practice.

As a result of these various formative influences on Chalmers' theories, five distinct stages can be identified in his thinking on poor relief. Each stage represented a different emphasis within his overall framework of beliefs. The first was in his early years in Cavers and Kilmany when he accepted Malthus' theory of population and the growing Scottish school of thought which denounced any maximum approach to poor relief as a debilitating influence on the morals and condition of society. After his conversion to evangelical Christianity he analysed the church's role in poor relief and in the process firmly relegated it to a subsidiary concern in his main work of evangelization. In his years in Glasgow he was forced to reconsider this stance, since the problem and the ministers' and elders' involvement in it was so great. As a result, he evolved a theory concerning man's innate natural ability to provide relief for all around him if left unhindered by any artificial centralised and legal relief system. Although he argued that Christianity would facilitate this natural solution, for a time his concern with his poor relief solution and the moral philosophy behind it diluted the concentration of his energies on evangelisation. In the 1830's this changed as he reverted to his original Glasgow plea that more churches and parishes were necessary to organise the natural poor relief system. Now he maintained that these church buildings and structures were needed first, and only then would it be possible to set about solving the moral and material problems of society within the more limited and manageable confines of the new parochial units.

The events leading up to the Disruption in 1843 and the Poor Relief Amendment Act of 1845 once again altered the balance in his approach to poor relief, with the result that he concluded that pauperism and social conditions would improve by themselves once there had been a full-scale mobilization of Christian resources. As before, it was not necessary for all to be converted to Christianity immediately, but once the morals of the people were elevated through good education and Christian example, then Christian conviction would follow in time and there would be no need for any poor relief policy as such, since society's problems would simply fade away in these natural, moral and Christian communities. Likewise, the ever-present threat of revolution would be removed.¹

In this context, the conclusion of Chalmers' most recent biographer, Stewart Brown, that Chalmers was "primarily an educator" with an ideal based upon the propagation of a "set of shared Christian and moral ideals" ² brings us no further forward than Cockburn's contemporary analysis. True, at the end of his life, education was definitely uppermost in Chalmers' thinking. By then I suspect he regretted not having concentrated more on education as opposed to poor relief, particularly given his willingness by the 1830's to argue in favour of state aid in the provision of parochial education. Even in the wider sense of Christian educator, however, Brown's assessment reveals little of the development in Chalmers' thinking on poor relief as it has been outlined above. This is not to say that Chalmers was inconsistent and constantly shifted the overall parameters of his arguments on the subject of relief. In this respect also I would

1. These ideas were summed up by Chalmers in a letter to Edinburgh's Lord Provost: N.L.S., MS. 3713/184, 23 May 1846, T. Chalmers to Adam Black.

2. Brown, Chalmers, p. 377.

disagree with Brown's conclusion that Chalmers was changing his mind at the end of his life about the state's function in poor relief. The voluntary nature of Chalmers' solution remained constant throughout; it was his emphasis on the various component parts of that solution that changed as his career advanced.

When it comes to a consideration of the practical implementation of Chalmers' poor relief theories it is difficult to make an assessment of their success. Little has been done on the general standard of living in Scotland in the period, and in Glasgow, where the bulk of poor relief came from private sources, Chalmers' limitation of the official relief system was only a part of the overall picture. Even within that limited section of provision for the poor it has been shown that he manipulated statistics and ignored others to "prove" his theories.

This thesis demonstrates for the first time that the St. John's experiment failed on Chalmers' own terms, even if one accepts his later contention that education should never have been included in the parish's responsibilities. The complementary religious aspects of the St. John's scheme were only successful in the field of education. Some of the St. John's parishioners did indeed live up to his criteria of church attendance, the moral and spiritual education of their young, and a spirit of neighbourliness, but these appear to have been in the minority. The evidence for the response of the remaining inhabitants of St. John's to the relief scheme generally remains tantalisingly elusive. It can only be surmised that they considered themselves no worse off than the other Glasgow inhabitants, the withdrawal of the Town's Hospital relief being compensated for by an active group of elders and deacons who were sometimes in a position to offer work when times were hard, although the strict inquisition when parish relief was applied for must have been humiliating. No one

knows the amount of want that must have been left unrelieved, nor the human misery that entailed, as indeed was also the case in the other Glasgow parishes.

Chalmers' repudiation of a regular official provision of relief for the poor was shared by significant sections of Scotland's middle and upper classes. Born of a similar belief in man's ability to control his fate by being morally upright and honest, there was a receptive audience for Chalmers' ideas in the early nineteenth century. Cockburn typified one section of this group. Despite being a Whig, and interested in moderate political and institutional reform, he had an abhorrence of the "strong poor", that is, the unemployed, many of whom he considered to be "lazy, unreasonable and reckless". He echoed the sentiments of a significant section of Scotland's population when he asked:

... are not millions of starving people the necessary occasional sloughs of a very manufacturing nation?¹

As well as reinforcing such general attitudes Chalmers also helped to perpetuate this moralistic approach to pauperism. His ideas on poor relief captured the imagination of many early nineteenth century Scots, English, Europeans and Americans, as indeed his sermons and works on many diverse topics had for many caught the "spirit of the age". In his sermons he was able to catch the attention of the highest and humblest in the land, despite being rough-spoken and unprepossessing in his appearance. Yet he appears to have had that unquantifiable quality of charisma that is so difficult for the historian to assess.² In the context of the history of poor relief, Chalmers' leadership was effective. This thesis has shown that a significant number of individuals, including important policy-makers

1. Cockburn, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 5.

2. Hanna, Memoirs, 2, pp. 88-90; Brown, Chalmers, pp.108-110; A.C. Cheyne (ed.), op. cit., pp. 9-11.

and decision-takers, were won over by his theories and tried to implement them. All of these attempts ultimately failed, and yet his theories survived, particularly among a number of the new generation of ministers in the Free Church.

At the same time, this antipathy to an official relief system, especially for the able-bodied poor, was also beginning to be significantly challenged by sections of society in Scotland and in England during Chalmers' lifetime. McGill, Burns and Thomson's opposition of the 1820's was given greater credence in the later 1830's as the voices of Alison and other doctors were added. This also has to be borne in mind when attempting to establish how far Chalmers' scheme was in keeping with the realities of life in Scotland in the first half of the nineteenth century. It is impossible to quantify what precisely was necessary for subsistence, what exactly it was like to be poor or a pauper in this period, nor how indeed the poor and paupers looked upon themselves and were regarded by the other sections of the working classes. Correspondingly, can an analysis of Chalmers' poor relief theories and experiments criticise his basic principles as harsh, unrealistic and indeed unchristian, or are such evaluations meaningless given the times in which he lived?¹

Alison's arguments show that it was possible to be a mid-nineteenth century man and yet perceive that poverty and immorality were not always linked and that there were a growing number

1. Among those who have come down against Chalmers are O.A. Checkland, 'Chalmers and William Pulteney Alison: A Conflict of Views on Scottish Social policy', in ed. A.C. Cheyne, *op. cit.*, p. 136; D.C. Smith, 'The Failure and Recovery of Social Criticism in the Scottish Church, 1830-1950' (Edinburgh Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1963), pp. 101-7; W.M. Kirkland, 'The Impact of the French Revolution on Scottish Religious Life and Thought with Special Reference to Thomas Chalmers, Robert Haldane, and Neil Douglas' (Edin. Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1970), pp. 151-2.

of economic and environmental factors outwith man's control that could make him destitute with no resources to fall back upon. The reasons Chalmers was unable to reach similar conclusions can be rationalised and explained as a product of his thinking, and his particular combination of evangelical fervour with Scottish common sense philosophy.¹ Nonetheless they can also be legitimately criticised.

Based on the belief that man, human nature and natural morality could be categorised as universal truths, his poor relief system was conceived in theory before the St. John's experiment. Chalmers assumed that it had also been proved in practice because of its alleged ability to cope with eighteenth century rural poverty. He consistently refused to consider that a manufacturing industrial economy might require a different solution, or indeed that agricultural labourers in a growing industrial society might not be able to implement his "natural" mechanisms of relief. This consistent refusal to even consider that he might be mistaken led him to ignore any "unsatisfactory" evidence - for that, he was indeed culpable.

This study of Chalmers' poor relief ideas and work is not aimed at simply analysing his individual beliefs. Its conclusion about his methods of thought, his ideals of moral behaviour, and his wish to bring Christianity into the depths of the nation's growing industrial towns reflected and reinforced similar developments in many other clergymen and professionals of his generation. His impact on general attitudes to relief in Scotland was considerable. His emphasis on man's ability to control his own fate may have been at odds with his equally strong assertion of man's need for Christ, but a general

1. For example, F. Vosges, 'Chalmers' Thinking Habits: Some Lessons from his Theology' in ed. A.C. Cheyne, op. cit., pp. 157-65.

acceptance of the former could be said to have been reinforced in the soul of the nation during his lifetime and owed much to his influence. Its most popular propounder in the later nineteenth century was Samuel Smiles with his self-help philosophy, and its impact still heard today in the continuing debate over the advantages and disadvantages of a welfare state.

Shortly after Chalmers' death, his active poor relief programme inspired several projects in Britain, Germany and America. It is well known that several of the founders of the Charity Organisation Society (C.O.S.) in 1869 openly acknowledged their debt to Chalmers, and indeed as late as 1924 the Jubilee Book of the Glasgow Charity Organisation Society carried Chalmers' picture as a "Pioneer in Organising Charity".¹ Chalmers' use of lay agents to visit and counsel the poor developed into visitors who compiled individual case-studies of those in need. So, in Elberfeld in Germany a system of highly organised and controlled relief evolved that owed part of its inspiration to Chalmers. In America, the American Charity Organisation Society owed a similar debt to Chalmers as its British counterpart.²

Chalmers' influence continued into the concluding decades of the nineteenth century. His former protege James Begg helped to establish the Edinburgh Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor and to institute the Chalmers' Lectures on Poor Law and Pauperism, in order to demonstrate the alleged mistakes of the 1845 Poor Law Amendment Act. The result of this was the appointment in 1869 of a

1. The Jubilee Book of the Glasgow Charity Organisation (Glasgow, 1924), p. 1; also, see A.F. Young and E.T. Ashton, British Social Work in the nineteenth century (London, 1956), pp. 67-80; C.L. Mowat, The Charity Organisation Society, 1869-1913 (London, 1961), pp. 9-12.

2. How Best to Reduce the Rates, or Dr. Chalmers and the Elberfeld System of Poor Relief (Glasgow, 1909); F.D. Watson, The Charity Organisation Movement in the United States (New York, 1922), pp. 27, 33-8, 57, 64, 132, 175; R.A. Mohl, Poverty in New York: 1783-1825 (New York, 1971), pp. 264-5.

Select Committee of the House of Commons.¹ Nothing material came of this, but Chalmers' arguments continued to be heard in articles and in government circles. For example, in 1892 C.S. Loch argued the merits of Chalmers' and the traditional Scottish relief system before the Royal Statistical Society, and pointed to an innate desire in man to be independent as part of "the better instincts which represent the real and underlying vitality of our race."² In 1909 Professor William Smart, the Adam Smith Professor of Political Economy at the University of Glasgow, added a memorandum to a Royal Commission on the Poor Laws in which he outlined the development of poor relief in Scotland, paying particular attention to the Chalmers-Alison debate.³ That such arguments were considered pertinent to the problem at the start of the twentieth century indicates the continued importance of a Chalmers' school of thought.

The 1909 Royal Commission on poor relief was the prelude to another crisis on public welfare in Britain. Chalmers' teachings enjoyed a renewed vogue in these years immediately before the First World War, as Lloyd George's schemes for state pensions and labour exchanges were discussed. McCaffrey has pointed out that the flurry of publishing activity relative to Chalmers, particularly by Christians preaching a social gospel, contributed to the debate. Thus, books appeared by N. Masterman, Miss Grace Chalmers Wood, Mrs. George Kerr, and Henry Hunter, all expounding

1. R.P. Lamond, The Scottish Poor Laws (2nd edn., Glasgow, 1892), p. ix; N.L.S., MS.7172/ 44, 28 February 1870, Printed Leaflet: 'A National Monument to the Memory of the Rev. Thomas Chalmers, D.D., D.C.L.

2. C.S. Loch, 'Poor Relief in Scotland: its Statistics and Development, 1791-1891', Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, 61 (1898), pp. 271-370, 331.

3. P.P. Sess. 1909, vol. 38, Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, Appendix: Memorandum by Professor Smart on the History of the Scots Poor Laws Prior to 1845, pp. 308-314.

Chalmers' poor relief ideas and those of the C.O.S., as opposed to any system of "state socialism".¹

The debate continues today. Along with the modern emphasis on determining a definition of poverty, something which did not concern Chalmers' contemporaries to any great extent, echoes of Chalmers' stress of safeguarding the independence of the individual, avoiding the demoralising effects of an automatic dole for those out of work, and advocating a decentralised and more individual approach to social problems generally are still heard. This is true on both sides of the Atlantic. Indeed, since 1983 in America a debate has taken place on whether the welfare state is in fact harming the poor, and the language used is once again reminiscent of Chalmers' arguments.²

As late as the 1930's Professor A.H. Halsey found evidence of a working class culture of independence in industrial Sunderland that demonstrated many of Chalmers' ideals:

... the slum is the dark side of the solidarity of the urban working class which so many have admired and romanticised. Solidarity can have the unacceptable face of exclusiveness. The old Johnson Street slum always served the macabre purpose of a daily warning to men and women who lost their grip on the frugal self-denying culture of respectability. If a man gave way to idleness or drink or gambling, or if a woman flouted the discipline of Monday washing-day, failed to keep a penny on the mantelpiece for tomorrow's gas, or swerved from the narrow path of sexual rectitude, Johnson Street was the hopeless house of correction to which he or she and the dependents would be³ consigned to without the intervention of police or judge or jury.

Yet Halsey also referred to an "ethic of sympathy" within this working class solidarity. Perhaps Chalmers was correct in pointing out the existence of an ambivalent attitude in man to want: that of righteous

1. McCaffrey, 'op. cit.', pp. 54-5.

2. National Review, 28 February 1986, pp. 19, 39-41, 47; 18 July 1986, p. 7.

3. A.H. Halsey, 'Summer Excursions: A Place Apart', The Listener, 3 February 1983, pp. 12-14.

condemnation coupled with a desire to help. It is certainly the case that these attitudes have yet to be resolved within an acceptable solution to pauperism if not to poverty. In that sense, Chalmers' quandary has continued relevance for today.

It would appear that Chalmers' arguments on poor relief cannot be dismissed out of hand. Although this thesis has demonstrated that his practical experiment in poor relief in St. John's failed unequivocally, as did its imitators, the ideal small parish community he emphasised in the last fifteen years of his life as an essential pre-condition for his parochial programme as a whole has never materialised in Britain. It is not surprising, however, that various aspects of his dream, which he considered to be eminently practicable, have appealed to those in later generations concerned with the Christian and social improvement of those around them. That is, a society in which a mobile independent workforce would willingly and easily transfer its labour to other skills if their own were threatened by a glut in the labour market; elevate themselves morally and materially by honest living, a sound secular and Christian education, and ultimately by contact with a Christian church; and live together in small parochial neighbourhoods, where the family and street formed a nucleus of loving support for relatives and friends and welcomed strangers into their midst with open arms.

It might be argued that this ideal would be a worthy one for today's inner city areas. Yet those centres are now even further removed from Chalmers' aim of close-knit communities, as former working class housing areas have been cleared away to make room for anonymous concrete blocks of flats. In addition, the dream itself had a very harsh side - in effect ignoring man's immediate material needs until this vision of society materialised. In our increasingly computerised, streamlined and labour-redundant age this has proved

unacceptable to most and indeed explains the decline in the later twentieth century of any direct influence of Chalmers' poor relief thinking.

This demise of Chalmers' thought, I would argue, is predictable in the tension inherent in it between the natural man as opposed to Chalmers' ideal Christian man. His final emphasis on the creation of local communities like the West Port where education and Christian contact were essential must be kept in mind. Although he still claimed that even a few Christians might morally influence the rest of a community and, with the help of universal education, create an independent pauper-free society, those few Christians were of paramount importance. Today, in an increasingly secularised world, the student of Chalmers must recognise this. At the end of his life his concerns and hopes for man, whether he be in the West Port of Edinburgh, Free St. John's in Glasgow, or the crofting communities of the Highlands, were centred primarily upon his spiritual welfare.

Chalmers died believing in the supreme efficacy of the Word of God, not in the sufficiency of poor relief programmes, to ensure man's ultimate spiritual and material welfare. For modern Christians who try to combine the two approaches his stance may appear uncompromising. Yet the ultimate alternative of a liberation theology is equally unattractive. In the end each Christian has to decide for himself, with the guidance of the church and his conscience. In making that decision a study of Chalmers' life and ideas still has something vital to offer, even if only to indicate one of the options available.

APPENDIX 1: Known Canvassers of Chalmers, 1814.

James Dennistoun: of Barbachly, (1758-1834). 164 Montrose Street. Glasgow banker and merchant. In 1809 established the Glasgow bank. Reputation as a great benefactor. Once Chalmers was in Glasgow, he became very friendly with him. Dennistoun was also a friend of Brougham, Cockburn and Jeffrey and was in favour of some measure of political reform.

1814-15: on Glasgow Town Council.

1814-21: a director of the Glasgow Stirlingshire Charitable Socieity.

1815-16: a director of the Glasgow Provident Bank.

1816-20: a member of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce.

1817-18: a director of the Glasgow Botanic Gardens.

1817-19: a director of the Glasgow Water Works Company.

Joshua Heywood: Glasgow merchant. 66 Glassford Street/Horn Bank, Govan (home).

1814-18: on Glasgow Town Council.

1814-17: a director of Glasgow Town's hospital.

1817-19: a director of the Glasgow Humane Society.

Robert Hood: Cooper. 63 Candleriggs. Elder in Mr. Dick's church, Burgher.

1814-17, 1819-24: on Glasgow Town Council.

1814-17, 1819-21: a director of Glasgow Town's Hospital.

1816-17: a director of Glasgow Royal Infirmary and the Glasgow Sabbath School Union.

1819-20: member of the Trades' and Magistrates' Club.

John Moore: Merchant.

1814-17: on Glasgow Town Council.

1814-18: member of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce.

1814-15: a director of the Glasgow Lunatic Asylum.

1814-17: a director of the Glasgow Royal Infirmary.

1815-16: a director of the Glasgow Provident Bank.

Archibald Newbigging: Calico printer and manufacturer, 27 Montrose Street.

1814-16, 1818-19: on Glasgow Town Council.

1814-15: treasurer, Glasgow Auxiliary Bible Society, a director of Glasgow Lunatic Asylum and of the Glasgow Town's Hospital, vice-president of the Glasgow Lancastrian School Society.

1815-16: a director of the Glasgow Royal Infirmary and of the Glasgow Provident Bank; convenor of the Committee for Boys in the Magdalene Asylum.

1816-17: a director of the Glasgow Lunatic Asylum, and president of the Lancastrian School Society.

1818-19: a director of the Glasgow Town's Hospital.

1819-20: vice-president of the Glasgow Auxiliary Bible Society; member of the Trades' and Magistrates' Club; 11 February 1819, Newbigging and three other councillors presented a petition from the Outer High parishioners to secure the election of an Evangelical minister to replace Dr. Balfour.

Charles Stuart Parker: of Blochairn. West Indian Merchant, Virginia Buildings. Villa at Fairlie, Largs, next to that of his brother-in-law, Hugh Tennent, son and nephew of Robert and John Tennent below. Parker, Hugh Tennent and Robert Brown, a merchant and an elder in St. John's from 1819 to 1832, were nicknamed the "'Clyde Clapham'" because of their evangelical concerns.

1814-16: on Glasgow Town Council.

1814-15: vice-president of the Glasgow Auxiliary Hibernian Society, a director of the Glasgow Lunatic Asylum and of the Glasgow Royal Infirmary.

1816: 5 April, agitated on the town council for a new church for Chalmers.

1817: 12 February, on the Tron Committee to provide an assistant for Chalmers; subscribed 2 guineas.

1818: helped to found an Auxiliary Society in Glasgow to the Naval and Military Bible Society in London.

1818-20: a member of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce.

1819: 11 February, signed the petition to secure an Evangelical successor to Dr. Balfour of the Outer High

Ebenezer Richardson: Manufacturer, 28 Glassford Street.

1814-21: on Glasgow Town Council.

1814-15: member of Glasgow Chamber of Commerce.

1814-18, 1819-20: a director of Glasgow Town's Hospital.

1817: 12 February, on Tron committee to provide an assistant for Chalmers; subscribed 2 guineas.

1819-21: a member of the Trades' and Magistrates' Club.

William Rodger: Builder, 39 Buchanan Street.

1814-15, 1819-24: on Glasgow Town Council.

1814-15: a director of the Glasgow Lunatic Asylum and of the Glasgow Royal Infirmary.

1816: 5 April, agitated with Parker on the council for a new church for Chalmers.

1817: 12 February, on Tron committee to provide an assistant for Chalmers; subscribed 2 guineas.

1819-20: a member of the Trades' and Magistrates' Club.

1819-20: a director of the Glasgow Town's Hospital.

John Tennent: (?-1827). Brewer, Drygate Bridge.

1814-15: vice-president of the Glasgow Auxiliary Bible Society.

1819-20: vice-president of the Glasgow Society for Educating the Deaf and Dumb; vice-president of the Trades' and Magistrates' Club; and vice-president of the Glasgow Auxiliary Bible Society.

Robert Tennent: (?-1825). Brother of John above; also in brewery company. Father-in-law of Charles S. Parker above. Home address, 157 George Street.

1815-19: on Glasgow Town Council.

1816-17: secretary, Glasgow Sabbath School Union; director, Glasgow Town's Hospital.

1817: 12 February, on Tron committee to provide an assistant for Chalmers; subscribed 2 guineas.

John Wood: Glasgow merchant, 164 Montrose Street/Villa-field, Taylor Street near Rottenrow (home).

1815-18: a director of the Glasgow Stirlingshire Charitable Society.

1819-20: a director of the Glasgow Society for Educating the Deaf and Dumb, and of the Glasgow Auxiliary Bible Society.

Walter Wood: Brother of John above. Also a merchant, 164 Montrose Street/Kensington Place (home). Sabbath school teacher in the Tron and in St. John's.

Sources: C.P., CHA 5.1.5., Tron Church Papers.

C.P., CHA 6.1.8, Journal , vol. 5, 1814-16.

C.P., CHA 4.3.67, 29 November 1814, I. Turpie to T. Chalmers.

C.P., CHA 6.2.8, 'General Memoranda'. 1815-18.

S.R.O., CH2/176.1, St. John's KSR, 1819-36.

G.B.R., 5 April 1816, 11 February 1819.

Glasgow Courier, 1814-21.

The Glasgow Directory, 1818.

J. Cleland, Annals of Glasgow (Glasgow, 1816), p. 237;

Description of Glasgow (Glasgow, 1840), p. 110.

J. Pagan, Glasgow, Past and Present, 3 vols. (Glasgow, 1884), vol. 2, pp. 65-66.

W.,. Hanna, Memoirs, 1, pp. 420ff.

Memoirs and Portraits of One Hundred Glasgow Men, 2 vols. (Glasgow, 1886). vol. 2, pp. 100, 314 ff.

Textiles Manufacture

Weaver	387
Spinner	36
Warper	24
Stocking	
Maker	20
Clothlapper	11
Dyer	11
Calenderer	6
Starcher	4
Twister	3
Heckler	2
Flax Dresser	2
Tape	
Manufacturer	2
Reels Yarn	1
Bandmaker	1
Winder	1
Twiner	1
Fringemaker	1
Winding	
Master	1
Flax Dryer	1
	<u>515</u>
	= 23.78%

Building Trade

Wright	42
Sawyer	20
Brickmaker	18
Bricklayer	17
Mason	17
Slater	15
Painter	5
Turner	5
Plasterer	4
Nailer	2
Plainmaker	2
Joiner	2
Plumber	1
Builder	1
Quarrier	1
Glazier	1
Plasterer	1
Causewayer	1
Carpenter	1
	<u>156</u>
	= 7.20%

Metal Industry

Smith	25
Founder	17
Blacksmith	6
Tinsmith	5
Engineer	5
Riddle	
maker	3
Wireworker	2
Filemaker	2
Engine	
Maker	2
Engine	
Keeper	2
Spoonmaker	1
Toolmaker	1
Coppersmith	1
Machine	1
Maker	1
	<u>74</u>
	= 3.42%

Merchants/Dealers

Grocer	57
Spirit Dealer	41
Merchant	30
Victualler	7
Hosier	7
Shopkeeper	5
Tea Dealer	4
Wood Merchant	3
Meal Dealer	3
Cattle dealer	2
Vintner	2
Fruiterer	2
Leather	
Merchant	1
Bookseller	1
Furniture	
Dealer	1
Chandler	1
Horsedealer	1
Poulterer	1
Clothier	1
Woollen Draper	1
Haberdasher	1
Tobacconist	1
Ironmonger	1
	<u>174</u>
	= 8.03%

Services

Carter	49
Porter	24
Teacher	9
Publican	7
Coachman	7
Currier	6
Hostler	4
Barber	3
Hairdresser	3
Servant	3
Innkeeper	2
Messenger	1
Doorkeeper	1
Jobber	1
Stabler	1
Boatman	1
Packman	1
	<u>123</u>
	= 5.68%

Rural

Cowfeeder	5
Miller	3
Laird	2
Farmer	1
Drover	1
	<u>12</u>
	= 0.55%

Professional

Minister	8
Doctor	5
Writer	2
Accountant	2
	<u>17</u>
	= 0.78%

<u>Crafts/Trades</u>		<u>Miscellaneous</u>		<u>Gov. Employees</u> (National and local)	
Shoemaker	73	Labourer	185	Police	8
Tailor	29	Manufacturer	25	Excise	
Baker	17	Clerk	19	Officer	4
Ropespinner	14	Watchman	8	Captain	2
Gardiner	11	Foreman	7	Soldier	2
Tanner	10	Beadle	3	Sailor	2
Brushmaker	10	Agent	3	Town	
Flesher	5	Warehouseman	2	Officer	1
Confectioner	5	Optician	2		<u>19</u>
Bookbinder	5	Shipmaster	1		= 0.88%
Cooper	5	Teller	1		
Potter	5	Landsurveyor	1		
Printer	4	Fiddler	1		
Brewery Worker	4		<u>258</u>	<u>Others</u>	
Pipemaker	4		= 11.91%	Widow	258
Saddler	4			Spinster	4
Clockmaker	2			Out of	
Comb Maker	2			Business	7
Cork Cutter	2			Unable to	
Tobacco Spinner	2			Work	1
Cabinet Maker	2			Pensioner	10
Typefounder	2			Lodger	<u>16</u>
Maltman	2				<u>296</u>
Candlemaker	2				= 13.67%
Hatmaker	2				
Umbrella Maker	1				
Hatter	1				
Upholsterer	1	<u>Unstated</u>	<u>275</u>		
Furrier	1		= 12.7%		
Glassman	1				
Glover	1				
Hedgeman	1	<u>Total</u>	<u>2,166</u>		
Straw-hat Maker	1				
Milliner	1				
Jeweller	1				
Millwright	1				
Wheelwright	1				
Coachmaker	1				
Stone					
Engraver	1				
Watchmaker	1				
Basket Maker	1				
Leather Cutter	1				
Pewterer	1				
Reedmaker	1				
Skinner	1				
Glue-maker	1				
Mathematical					
Instrument					
Maker	1				
Collier	1				
Parer	1				
	<u>247</u>				
	= 11.40%				

Source: C.P., CHA 5.1.14,
Statistical, Moral and Educational
Survey of St. John's Parish, 1819.

Source: C.P., CHA 5.1.14,
Statistical, Moral and Educational
Survey of St. John's Parish, 1819.

APPENDIX 3: Scottish Parishes which emulated the
St. John's Experiment.

1. St. Mungo's, Castlemilk, Dumfriesshire: small, predominantly
agricultural parish.

Voluntary poor relief experiment: 1803-1842.

Main Motivator: Andrew Jameson (1779-1842), minister of St.. Mungo's,
1803-1861. Came to know Chalmers through the
latter's published works; corresponded with Chalmers.
Son, Andrew, attended St. Andrew's University while
Chalmers was professor there.

<u>Population:</u>	<u>1792</u>	<u>1801</u>	<u>1811</u>	<u>1821</u>	<u>1831</u>	<u>1841</u>
	640	644	724	727	791	618

History of experiment:

1790's: 8 paupers on poor roll, provided for by church door
collections and charity of neighbours. Agricultural
improvements in parish, small farms united, increase of
seasonal labourers, increased poor relief demands in the
winters.

1803: Jameson reinforced the already-existing voluntary system.
Strict control of numbers on roll; heritors made personally
responsible for migrant seasonal labourers; "visitors" appointed
to seek help for poor from relatives and neighbours; work
provided for poor out of the statute labour money.

1825: Jameson contacts Chalmers, and writes he has been encouraged and
advised by Chalmers' written works on poor relief, and his
letters to Jameson. Latter describes the St. Mungo's system as
an adoption of Chalmers' one, but "modified to existing
circumstances". However, Jameson did have doubts over its
efficiency in years of crisis.

1828: Scheme so successful, only 2 official paupers. Sir John Maxwell
of Springhill tried, unsuccessfully, to obtain the living of
Gretna for Jameson so as he might introduce his system there.
At that time, Gretna had a voluntary assessment of £100 a year.

1836: Voluntary system still in operation, but having problems.

1842: A compulsory assessment of £85 recorded.

Comment: There were obvious distinctions between Jameson's and
Chalmers' poor relief schemes. The main one concerned the
formers's use of the statute labour money to provide work -
although this was not a direct poor relief tax, it was
effectively an indirect one. In addition, Jameson started
his scheme long before Chalmers' work in Glasgow. However,
once Chalmers had begun to write on the subject Jameson
considered himself to be one of his followers. The
deep-rooted concern to preserve a 'Scottish' relief system
obviously shared by some of Chalmers' contemporaries.

Sources: S.A.vol. 11, no.29, "Castlemilk", pp. 383-390.

N.S.A., vol. 4, "Castlemilk", pp. 203-217.

P.P. Sess. 1843 (11), vol. 22, p. 21.

P.P. Sess. 1844 (598), vol. 24, p. 85.

St. A.U.L., MS.30385.412, 12 October 1825, A. Jameson to T. Chalmers.

C.P., CHA 4.94.22, May 1828, 4.251.63, 24 April 1836, A. Jameson to T. Chalmers.

2. Kirriemuir, Forfar: Prosperous, agricultural parish, some coarse linen manufacture.

Voluntary poor relief experiment: 1814-1840.

Main Motivator: Thomas Easton (1779-1856), minister of Kirriemuir, 1810-1856. Like Jameson in St. Mungo's, Easton started his scheme before St. John's, but later read Chalmers' accounts and wrote to him for encouragement and advice. In 1825 Easton wrote an account of his poor relief scheme, of which Chalmers had a copy.

<u>Population:</u>	<u>1792</u>	<u>1801</u>	<u>1811</u>	<u>1821</u>	<u>1831</u>	<u>1841</u>
	4,358	4,421	4,791	5,506	6,425	7,085

History of Experiment:

1790's: 19 regular paupers, provided for by the interest on a small capital of £70, church collections, fines and dues.

1814-17: Capital exhausted, and up to £200 spent on poor relief each year; voluntary system intensified, along Easton's and Chalmers' guidelines.

1817-19: average of £345 a year on poor relief.

1820-24: average of £190 a year on poor relief.

<u>1814-24:</u>	total expenditure on poor relief =	£2,612 5s. 9d.
	total income	= £2,651 17s. 6d.

1825-30: £250-£300 a year spent on poor relief; collections in 1830 = £224.

1835: £400 spent on poor relief.

1839: £525 spent on poor relief.

1814-40: sources for the above relief - church collections (just over half the relief fund); heritors' donations (approx. 20%); donations, fines and dues.

1840: an assessment of £455 necessary to balance the books.

1842: 258 paupers, £840 17s.9d. distributed in poor relief.

Comment: In many respects Easton's approach to poor relief theory was similar to Chalmers': "The giving of charity ought never to be made a matter of course."¹ Rather, all relief should be temporary, each individual and his situation being continuously re-assessed. Relatives and friends were encouraged to help their neighbours. In fact, he claimed his management of the Kirriemuir system of relief was more effective than Chalmers' in St. John's. Two deacons were ordained and they, alongside the minister and elders, examined each case and distributed relief where necessary. He was opposed to Chalmers' ideal aim of abolishing even sessional relief as an official source of charity. Like Chalmers, however, he was emphatic that many more churches needed to be built, to increase the revenue from church door collections, and to guide people back to his "natural" system of relief.

Sources: S.A., vol. 12, no.16, "Kirriemuir", pp. 187-198, and Appendix, p. 168.

N.S.A., vol. 11, "Kirriemuir", pp. 158-191.

T. Easton, Statements relative to the Pauperism of Kirriemuir. 1814-1825. (Forfar, 1825); p. 14.¹

P.P. Sess. 1844 (565), vol. 22, pp. 73, 75.

C.P., CHA 4.73.1, 27 January 1827, 4.73.3, 14 February 1827, 4.221.1, 22 August 1834, 4.273.16, 28 February 1838, T. Easton to T. Chalmers.

3. Dunfermline, Fife: textiles centre, mining, agriculture.

Voluntary poor relief experiment: 1815-1839.

Main motivators: a group of heritors including Thomas Bruce, 7th. earl of Elgin (1766-1841) interested in voluntary relief system in 1815. Plan to apply Chalmers' principles from Edinburgh Review articles of 1817 and 1818, before St. John's experiment.

<u>Population:</u>	<u>1791</u>	<u>1801</u>	<u>1811</u>	<u>1821</u>	<u>1831</u>	<u>1841</u>
	9,550	9,980	11,649	13,681	17,068	19,778

History of experiment:

1814: a voluntary assessment, church collections and fines provided relief fund; kirk session in debt for £219.

1815: A Voluntary Association formed to support the poor. Managed by a committee of heritors, ministers, and inhabitants (Established Church and Dissenters). Funded by subscriptions from heritors and householders, annual collections in chapels of ease and dissenting chapels, and one general collection at an annual sermon. The regular kirk session relief system operated alongside it, but experienced continuous financial difficulties.

1829: 211 paupers in the parish, £589 spent on poor relief, voluntary contributions = £351.

1838: 342 paupers, £961 spent on poor relief, voluntary contributions = £640.

1839: A legal assessment was imposed, and the ideas behind the Voluntary Association abandoned.

1842: 1,022 paupers; £1,772 11s. 6d. distributed in official relief; assessment = £2,275 17s. 5d.

Comment: The originators of the Dunfermline scheme, particularly Elgin, gained renewed determination to persevere with their voluntary scheme in the troubled post-Napoleonic years from Chalmers' writings. Elgin sought Chalmers' advice on several occasions, and Chalmers preached the annual sermon for the Association's funds at least twice. However, there is no evidence of any detailed adoption of the St. John's system in its appointment of deacons to manage the poor relief, for example.

Sources: S.R.O., CH2/592.10, KSR Dunfermline Abbey, 1799-1820, CH2/592.11, KSR Dunfermline Abbey, 1821-1839.

P.P. Sess. 1844 (565), vol. 22, p. 352; (598), vol. 24, p. 244.

P. Chalmers, History of Dunfermline (Edinburgh, 1844-59), pp. 463ff.

C.P., CHA 4.6.14, 19 July 1817, 4.20.1, 30 January 1822, 4.20.2, 4 February 1822, 4.20.4, 18 March 1822, 4.20.6, 20 March 1822, earl of Elgin to T. Chalmers.

St. A.U.L., MS. 30385.416, 8 August 1822, F. Jardine to T. Chalmers.

4. Canongate, Edinburgh:

Voluntary poor relief experiment : 1821-1823.

Main motivators: the heritors and elders.

<u>Population</u> :	<u>1791</u>	<u>1801</u>	<u>1811</u>	<u>1821</u>	<u>1831</u>	<u>1841</u>
	6,200	5,677	7,692	9,870	10,175	9,944

History of experiment:

1761: kirk session administered relief through a Charity Workhouse, funded out of church collections, dues and benefactions.

1813: An assessment imposed; heritors, magistrates, and deacons from the guilds involved in the management of the workhouse.

1821: Committee of heritors met in August to consider adopting the St. John's system in the Canongate. The kirk session agreed: parish divided into districts, elders instructed in the details of the experiment, that is, to provide for the poor out of the church collections, and to visit and scrutinise applicants for relief.

1821-23: Over the 20 months of the experiment, 12 August 1821 - 26 April 1823, the kirk session examined 86 cases, and determined individual needs, inquired into their parish residence, their ability to work, and the potential help of relatives.

1822: In December, the managers of the workhouse decided to review the new system. The session objected, but the magistrates and the trade deacons and baillies also stepped in. As a result of the ensuing tension, the session surrendered the management of the poor to the heritors, reserving the right to grant occasional relief and to be represented in the general administration of relief.

1823: Experiment formally concluded on 26 April 1823, and an assessment re-imposed.

1828: 1,137 paupers, including 83 in the workhouse.

Comment: Direct reference was made in the Canongate session records to their implementation of "Dr. Chalmers' plan relative to the management of the poor". However, the records contain no mention of the appointment of deacons. Dr. John Lee (1779-1859) arrived in the parish in the middle of the experiment, April 1822, and initially supported it. In later years, however, he repudiated it and the parochial system generally as impractical for the congested city areas.

Sources: S.A., vol. 6, no. 57, "Canongate", pp. 559ff.

N.S.A., vol. 1, "Canongate", pp. 614ff.

P.P. Sess. 1818 (358), vol. 5, p. 55.

P.P. Sess. 1831 (5), vol. 18, p. 390.

P.P. Sess. 1834 (App. A ., Part II), vol. 29, p. 208a.

P.P. Sess. 1843 (1), vol. 22, p. 25.

S.R.O., CH2/122.16, KSR Canongate, Edinburgh, 1812-1820; 22 March, 23 April, 31 May 1813; 15 April 1814; 3 September 1818; 5 January 1819; CH 2/122.17, KSR Canongate, 1817-1821, 15 June, 5 July 1821; CH 2/122.20, KSR Canongate, 1821-9, 15 June, 5 July, 6 August, 27 September, 25 October 1821; 31 January, 28 February, 28 March, 18 April, 30 May, 6 and 27 June, 26 July, 5 and 29 August, 26 and 31 October, 25 and 28 November, 26 December 1822; 30 January, 5 and 28 February, 26 March 1823.

N.L.S., Lee Papers, MS. 3435/66, 25 June 1822, T. Chalmers to the Rev. Dr. Lee.

C.P., CHA 4.257.41, 27 December 1836, D. Waddell to T. Chalmers; 4.281.33, 9 August 1839, J. Clark to T. Chalmers.

5. Langholm, Dumfriesshire:

Voluntary poor relief experiment: 1822 - 1830.

Main Motivators: William Berry Shaw (1774-1856), minister of Langholm, 1812-1856. Knew Chalmers at St. Andrews University, and was assistant in Robertson, near Cavers. Several heritors also interested in Chalmers' poor relief scheme, especially Mr. Maxwell of Broomholm.

<u>Population:</u>	<u>1791</u>	<u>1801</u>	<u>1811</u>	<u>1821</u>	<u>1831</u>	<u>1841</u>
	2,540	2,536	2,636	2,957	2,676	2,820

History of experiment:

1773: Assessment system adopted.

1792: Assessment = £100 a year; collections = £15 a year.

1817: 11 regular paupers, 27 occasional poor.

1818: assessment = £240.

1822: assessment = £320. In November of that year Chalmers' retracting process was begun.

1822-3: Collections = £52, only one new regular pauper, several occasional ones. Credit of £50; annual assessment halved, £320 to £160.

1830: assessment back to £320, yet collections maintained at £52. Shaw maintained the session just could not cope with the poverty of the parish as new cases were coming on more quickly than the old ones dropped off.

1835: 62 regular paupers, 30-40 occasional poor.

1844: assessment = £400, 150 regular and occasional poor.

Comment: Shaw's correspondence with Chalmers, and his efforts to promote Chalmers' poor relief system in his own and other border parishes, demonstrate the great impact Chalmers' poor relief ideas had upon him,. Like Easton in Kirriemuir, and Jameson in nearby Castlemilk, he aimed to limit official relief to as few as possible: lunatics, the blind, aged, and diseased, with no relatives. Any other "deserving persons" were to be helped in secret and temporarily, and relatives and neighbours were exhorted to give them as much as they could. The duke of Buccleuch also supported the system for a time after it had begun. Shaw defended his and Chalmers' system in print, although like Easton he considered Chalmers' ultimate aim of the abolition of even minimal official sessional relief to be "a species of theoretical refinement that can never be realised in practice".¹ In May 1825, Shaw was still optimistic of success. However, by 1830 it had ceased to function: new cases were coming on the roll faster than old ones dropped off (contrary to Chalmers' predictions of a five year life for "old" paupers). There is no evidence of deacons in Langholm.

Sources: S.A., vol. 13, no. 38, "Langholm", pp. 587-614.

N.S.A., vol. 4, "Langholm", pp. 416-28.

P.P. Sess. 1817 (462), vol. 6, p. 60.

P.P. Sess. 1818 (358), vol. 5, p. 60.

P.P. Sess. 1844 (565), vol. 22, p. 639: (598), vol. 24, p. 89.

W.B. Shaw, 'Dr. Chalmers on the Pauperism of Glasgow', in The Edinburgh Christian Instructor, 23 (1824), pp. 150-60.1

N.L.S., Minto Papers, MS. 12122.84, 6 November 1824, MS. 12122.89, 21 December 1824, MS. 12122.91, 20 January 1825,

W.B. Shaw to the earl of Minto; MS. 12122.86, 8 November 1824, T. Chalmers to the earl of Minto.

C.P., CHA 4.27.27, 27 October 1823, 4.27.29, 25 December 1823, 4.49.14, 19 January 1825, 4.49.16, 22 April 1825, 4.49.18, 3 May 1825, 4.49.20, 25 July 1825, 4.148.8, 9 April 1830, W.B. Shaw to T. Chalmers.

6. Dirleton, East Lothian: prosperous agricultural parish.

Voluntary poor relief experiment: 1823-1838.

Main Motivator: William Stark (1772-1834), minister of Dirleton 1805-1834. Read Chalmers' accounts of St. John's, corresponded with him and became friendly.

<u>Population:</u>	<u>1791</u>	<u>1801</u>	<u>1811</u>	<u>1821</u>	<u>1831</u>	<u>1841</u>
	1,200	1,115	1,211	1,315	1,384	1,497

History of experiment:

1792: 40 paupers on roll, maintained by church collections and the interest on several legacies.

1800: dearth, temporary compulsory assessment imposed.

1806: assessment again.

1818: assessment = £86, church collections = £21.8s.4d..

1822-3: total expenditure on relief = £158. 11s. 0d..

1823: voluntary system re-introduced: 33 paupers.

1823-4: church collections rose by 500%, to £144. 11s. 7½d.; these and interest of £40 a year on legacy=voluntary poor relief funds.

Total expenditure on relief = £158. 11s. 0d..

1825: Credit of £15 in session funds.

1835: Credit of £63 in session funds.

1836: Number of paupers fallen to 25, total spent on relief = £130; total collections fallen c.50% since 1823-4 to £84.

1837-8: £150 a year spent on poor relief, including 101 occasional cases; collections = c. £59 (a further decrease of 30%) and £17. 10s. in special collections and donations for the poor.

1838: return to a compulsory assessment of £84.

1842-5: assessment = £100 - £150 a year.

Comment: Stark agreed with Chalmers' belief in a "natural" solution to poor relief, based on "the genuine unsophisticated workings of human nature". He also emphasised the necessity for a renewal of Christianity and education. Stark convinced the heritors that an experiment was worthwhile, particularly William Hamilton Nisbet and his son-in-law, Robert Ferguson of Raith. A Savings Bank was also instituted in the parish. Relatives were encouraged to help, and temporary relief was tried before anyone became a regular pauper. No evidence of deacons. Also, the heritors agreed to certain sums for their "voluntary" church offerings. In 1830 Stark was still confident of his success. However, after his death in 1834, the scheme faltered, as the "voluntary" church contributions fell off. In Dirleton Stark had had a high degree of co-operation from his elders and parishioners. The ultimate failure of the scheme, however, was indicative of the mounting poor relief problems even in Chalmers' "ideal" setting of a small rural parish.

Sources: S.A., vol. 3, no. 21, "Dirleton", pp. 194-7.
 N.S.A., vol. 2, "Dirleton", pp. 202-4.
 P.P. Sess. 1818 (358), vol. 5, p. 57.
 P.P. Sess. 1831 (5), vol. 18, p. 386.
 P.P. Sess. 1834 (App. A, Part II), vol. 29, p. 211aff.
 P.P. Sess. 1843 (11), vol. 22, p. 37.
 P.P. Sess. 1844 (565), vol. 22, p. 325.
 S.R.O., CH 2/1157.23 Kirk Session Funds Dirleton, 1822-1845, 25 March 1838, 10 July 1842: CH 2/1157.8, Excerpts from Minutes Dirleton, 1655-1845, pp. 5-6, 9: CH 2/1157.4, KSR Dirleton 1806-17, 21 July 1806; CH 2/1157.5, KSR Dirleton 1817-43, 30 July 1822. C.P., CHA 4.148.51, 3 August 1830, 4.215.8, 27 March 1833, W. Stark to T. Chalmers.
W. Stark, Considerations addressed to the Heritors and Kirk Sessions of Scotland, particularly of the Borders Counties, on certain Questions Connected with the Administration of the Affairs of the Poor (Edinburgh, 1826); p. 70.

7. Kilbarnock, Ayrshire: Textiles centre (wool and cotton), tan-works, manufacture of carpets, hats and bonnets, hosiery, machinery, telescopes, tobacco, candles, saddlery.

Voluntary poor relief experiment: 1827-1835.

Main Motivator: John Parker of Asloss, heritor - a friend of Robert Wodrow and Charles Naismith, elder and deacon in St. John's, Glasgow and introduced by them to Thomas Chalmers. Impressed by Chalmers' writings and his work in Glasgow, Parker encouraged the ministers and the other heritors of Kilbarnock to attempt a similar poor relief scheme.

Population: 1791 1801 1811 1821 1831 1841

History of experiment:

1792: problems in traditional voluntary relief system - church collections only provided 6d. - 1/- a week for each pauper. Ministers advocate an assessment necessary.

1800: after famine and trade fluctuations, a legal assessment was imposed annually.

1812: General Session of Kilmarnock formed to administer and distribute the poor funds - made up of representatives from the two kirk sessions and a committee of heritors.

1827: assessment = £1,600 a year. Parker decided to try to implement the St. John's plan, and advised the ministers and heritors about it. Deacons appointed. Parker personally scrutinised and purged the poor roll. A large decrease in the number of paupers was reported.

1829: assessment abolished, but heritors encouraged to contribute "voluntarily" to church plate the amount they had been assessed for previously. Dissenters were also involved - contributed part of their collections, and their poor were looked after.

1832: cholera epidemic: as assessment of £263 11s. 6½d. imposed.

1833: decline in church collections; General Session agreed to re-impose an assessment, but deacons continued in their poor relief duties.

1835: formal return to assessment system.

1839: 227 paupers, annual assessment = £1,500.

1842: assessment = £2,049 6s. 8d.

Comment: Parker was a gradual convert to Chalmers' poor relief proposals. Between 1827 and 1829 he was completely won over to Chalmers' views through the latter's writings and letters of advice, and described the Kilmarnock trial as "a fresh triumph of your excellent parochial system". Parker did most of the work in purging the poor roll, although deacons were also appointed to examine new applicants and to distribute relief. However, there was a certain amount of pre-arranged "voluntary" church offerings, and the General Session continued in its centralised administrative role, contrary to Chalmers' theoretical writings on the subject. Nonetheless, a genuine attempt to implement a system based on some of Chalmers' principles had been made. There was simply not enough manpower nor resources to implement it fully or successfully.

Sources: S.A., vol 2, no. 9, "Kilmarnock", pp. 84-108.
 N.S.A., vol. 5, "Kilmarnock", pp. 535-64.
 P.P. Sess 1843 (ii), Vol. 22, p. 9.
 P.P. Sess. 1844 (563), vol. 20, p. 710; (598), vol. 24, p. 145.
 S.R.O., HR/642.1, HR Kilmarnock, 1791-1817, 1 August 1791, 6 February 1792, 3 December 1792, 14 April 1800; HR/642.2, HR Kilmarnock, 1816-1835, 15 November 1816, 14 and 28 September 1827, pp. 159-160, 5, 22 and 26 February, 5 August 1828, pp. 166-7, 170-1, 173-5, 196-7, 3 February, 5 March, 4 and 18 August 1830, pp. 225-7, 7 May, 1 October 1832, pp. 279, 301, 5 February, 6 August 1833, pp. 310-311, 5 March 1835, p. 388; HR/642.6, Kilmarnock Heritors Cash Book, 1819-1836, pp. 35, 72; CH2/572.1, KSR Kilmarnock High, 1811-1862, 23 April 1812, p. 9; CH2/572.9, KSR Laigh, Kilmarnock, 23 January 1812.
 C.P., CHA 4.82.34, 10 September 1827, 4.98.1, 13 March 1828, 4.126.42, 4 September 1829, J. Parker to T. Chalmers.

8. Inverness: small industries - hemp, wool, tan works; agriculture; construction of Caledonian canal.

Voluntary poor relief experiment: 1828-1840 (1843).

Main motivators: several inhabitants of Inverness, particularly George Cameron, an insurance agent. Read Chalmers' Christian and Civic Economy, and wrote to him for advice.

<u>Population:</u>	<u>1791</u>	<u>1801</u>	<u>1811</u>	<u>1821</u>	<u>1831</u>	<u>1841</u>
	7,930	8,732	10,750	12,264	14,324	15,418

History of experiment:

1800-28: no assessment system; three poor relief structures in parish - kirk sessional relief, funded out of the church collections, rents and interest from bequests; a soup kitchen funded out of public subscriptions; the magistrates distributed the interest from several charitable mortifications.

1816: society formed to suppress begging and relieve indigence.

1828: funds of above society declined, increase of unemployed labourers. A public meeting called to discuss the poor relief system of the whole parish - appointed a committee to compile a report. The committee delegated three men to gather information on pauperism all over Scotland. In the process the three read Chalmers' Christian and Civic Economy, and incorporated its "natural method" into their recommendations. A second public meeting agreed, and it was decided that the kirk session should take over all the official poor relief of the parish. The magistrates and the kirk session agreed to try Chalmers' scheme. The parish was divided into districts, individuals appointed to each, and relatives and neighbours encouraged to give relief.

1828-33: under the new system, the kirk session sank further and further into debt especially after a cholera outbreak in 1832. By July 1833 it was unable to take any more poor on its roll.

1834: a second cholera outbreak.

1837: in November the session decided an assessment was necessary.

1840: magistrates and heritors agreed to an assessment.

1841: magistrates and heritors changed their mind, and agreed to try the voluntary system again - against the opposition of the kirk session.

1842: a voluntary assessment of £700 - £800 imposed.

1843: finally, Inverness went over to a full assessment system.

Comment: Cameron was another example of an individual being won over by Chalmers' writings on the subject of poor relief. He was convinced that the best method of providing relief was through "the superintendence of our ecclesiastical police",¹ that is the church and its officers supervising the charity and benevolence of neighbours and relatives. The session records reveal the attempt to implement this ideal, with elders visiting to ensure that all was being done that could be by neighbours and friends and carrying out the functions of Chalmers' deacons. The main problem in providing relief in the parish was the large numbers requiring occasional relief. It was that factor that led the session to aver "the utter inadequacy of the public funds for their support".²

Sources: S.A., vol. 9, no. 39, "Inverness", pp. 603ff.

N.S.A., vol. 14, "Inverness", pp. 1-35.

P.P. Sess. 1843 (11), vol. 22, p. 39.

Report of the Sub-Committee of the Inverness Society for the Suppression of Begging (Edinburgh, 1828).

S.R.O., CH2/720.14, KSR Inverness, 1824-28, 5 and 12 May, 1 July, 2 August 1828, 27 January 1829, 1 June, 6 July 1830, 9 March 1832, 14 July 1833, 9 November 1837, 19 January 1840, 1 March, 17 July, 2 August², 12 August 1841, 13 January, 10 March, 16 May, 6 and 14 July, 3 August 1842, 13 April, 31 May, 13 July 1843.

C.P., CHA 4.90.1, 8 March 1828, 4.90.3, 29 April 1828¹, G. Cameron to T. Chalmers.

9. North Leith: centre of trade - ship-building, saw-mills, rope works, sail-cloth manufacture, soap and candleworks, glassworks, sugar refining, ironworks.

Voluntary poor relief experiment: 1829-?

Main motivator: George Bell, a merchant and elder in North Leith from September 1829. Knew Chalmers personally and admired his poor relief proposals.

<u>Population</u> :	<u>1792</u>	<u>1801</u>	<u>1811</u>	<u>1821</u>	<u>1831</u>	<u>1841</u>
	2,409	3,288	4,875	7,025	7,416	8,492

History of experiment:

1790's: annual average of 60 poor, provided for by the church collections.

1818: 86 paupers - collections = £161, voluntary contributions from heritors = £42.

1829: tighter scrutiny of poor on roll, lists of poor made up with individual's details, elders encouraged to visit. Bell appointed to a committee to cut the poor relief burden further.

1830: Bell met Chalmers and talked to him about pauperism,. In October the 1829 committee reported - its proposals were similar to the St. John's plan. The "old" poor were to continue to be supplied out of an assessment, the new out of the church collections. Each elder was instructed to visit and distribute relief to the poor of his district, and to establish whether claimants were doing all they could for themselves and were being helped as much as possible by relatives. Stated aim was the abolition of the assessment. The session approved, and immediately 26 individual paupers ceased to receive relief, 19 had their allowance reduced, and 3 had it increased. In December Bell reported to Chalmers that the North Leith session had embarked upon "your retracing system".¹

1832: typhus and cholera epidemics.

1833: £720 spent on pauperism, including a compulsory assessment of £500.

1834-1841: no evidence in the session records that the assessment ever did decrease or disappear.

Comment: Bell's interest in a rigorously conducted poor relief system was shared by some at least of the North Leith elders - the initial moves in 1829 to tighten up their scrutinies of applicants were made before he was ordained as elder. He was also able to build on that, and to interest a number of elders in Chalmers' ideas, and convinced them that as the assessments declined the "spontaneous liberality" of the congregation would increase.² However, some of the older members of the session were more sceptical. The fact that the initiation of the experiment was closely followed by epidemics also militated against it. In the later 1830's, the energies of the kirk session, including Bell, switched from social conditions to spiritual conversion in their work for the church extension movement.

Sources: S.A., vol. 6, no. 57, "North Leith", pp. 570-76.

N.S.A., vol. 2, 2, "Leith", pp. 760-82.

P.P. Sess. 1818 (358), vol. 5, p. 55.

P.P. Sess. 1831 (5) vol. 18, p. 380.

S.R.O., CH2/621.12, KSR North Leith, 1822-41, 27 January, 24 March, 28 April, 30 June, 5 August, 29 September, 24 November 1829, 23 February, 13 April, 29 June, 27 July, 9 August, 28 September, 26 October², 18 November, 29 November 1830, 24 January, 2 July 1832, 24 September 1833, 31 May, 23 September 1834, 19 May, 28 July, 29 September, 27 October 1835, 27 November 1838, 25 June 1839.

C.P., CHA 4.132.31, 14 December 1831¹, 4.259.22, 14 July 1837, 4.270.71, 17 May, no year, 4.270.73, n.d., 4.270.77, 29 December 1838, G. Bell to T. Chalmers.

10. Dumfries: agriculture, manufacture of hats and stockings.

Voluntary poor relief experiment: 1830-32.

Main motivator: Thomas Tudor Duncan (1776-1858), minister of Greyfriars parish, Dumfries 1806-1858. He was a brother of Henry Duncan of Ruthwell, and like him knew Chalmers well, and was a regular correspondent.

<u>Population:</u>	<u>1792</u>	<u>1801</u>	<u>1811</u>	<u>1821</u>	<u>1831</u>	<u>1841</u>
	7,000	7,288	9,262	11,052	11,606	11,409

History of experiment:

1753: Poor's House created, run by directors from the kirk session, town council, and inhabitants. Funded out of mortified funds, rent of land, annual subscriptions and donations.

1830: new voluntary scheme attempted along Chalmers' lines - in an effort to stave off an assessment. First, to provide the landward poor out of the collections only, and secondly the parish was divided into 41 districts and visitors appointed "to inquire into and supply the wants of the poor".¹

1832: increased burdens due to cholera outbreak, a voluntary assessment imposed - total poor relief cost for parish estimated at £1,500.

1842: legal assessment: = £1,500.

Comment: The Dumfries experiment was both limited and short-lived. The kirk session never regained complete control of poor relief, but rather a large central board of control nominated by the magistrates, heritors and kirk session supervised the entire poor relief structure. Like Leith, the impact of the cholera epidemic hastened the ending of the 'experiment', as Duncan himself admitted. Interestingly, in 1841 William Gemmil, the Superintendent of the Poor in the Dumfries Poor's House wrote to Chalmers and asserted his belief in Chalmers' principles, particularly his emphasis on the religious and moral education of the young, as the only effective solution for social problems: "I am of the belief, if there had been no patronage etc. to cause Dissent, and a sufficient church accommodation for all the people with efficient pastors, and education attended to that the weekly collections on the Sabbath would have been sufficient for the support of the poor." 2

Sources: S.A., vol. 5, no. 7, "Dumfries", pp. 119-144.
 N.S.A., vol. 4, "Dumfries", pp. 1-28, p. 5.¹
 P.P. Sess. 1831 (5), vol. 18, p. 379.
 P.P. Sess. 1843 (11), vol. 22, p. 20.
 P.P. Sess. 1844 (598), vol. 24, p. 96.
 C.P., CHA 4.133.12, 17 April 1830, T. Brown to T. Chalmers, 4.25.33, 19 June 1823, 4.221.53, 23 January 1834, 4.221.59, 20 February 1834, T.T. Duncan to T. Chalmers; 4.298.49, 10 May 1841, W. Gemmil to T. Chalmers.²

11. Dalkeith, Midlothian: agriculture, woollen mill, mining.

Voluntary poor relief experiment: 1831-1836

Main motivator: James Monteith (1790-1856) minister of Dalkeith (presented on Chalmers' recommendation to the patron of the Duke of Buccleuch) 1832-1843. Father was owner of Blantyre cotton works - James Monteith knew Chalmers in Glasgow and helped him in St. John's.

<u>Population:</u>	<u>1791</u>	<u>1801</u>	<u>1811</u>	<u>1821</u>	<u>1831</u>	<u>1841</u>
	4,366	3,906	4,709	5,169	5,586	5,830

History of experiment:

1750: charity workhouse founded.

1813: assessment necessary to fund workhouse.

1818: assessment = £300.

1832: Monteith arrived in parish, started a poor relief experiment - abolished workhouse, relatives and neighbours encouraged to help the poor, strict control over sessional relief (those found drunk forfeited relief for one month, mothers of illegitimate children refused relief). Neighbours' "charitable sympathies" reported as having re-opened.

1832-6: yet assessment remained at some level throughout: 8d. per £1 stg. on rental of parish.

1836: January, petition to re-open workhouse, granted in April.

1837-40: assessment raised to 10d. per £1 stg.

1842: assessment = £511; 106 paupers - £670 17s. 7d. distributed.

Comment: In 1834 the English assistant Poor Law Commissioner, E.C. Tufnell, cited Monteith's work in Dalkeith as an example of Chalmers' "retracing process" from pauperism to "a sound moral condition".¹ Tufnell's and Monteith's faith in its success, however, proved to be unfounded, since no impact was made on the assessment.

Sources: S.A., vol. 12, no. 2, "Dalkeith", pp. 18-27.

N.S.A., vol. 1, "Dalkeith", pp. 451-533.

P.P. Sess. 1818 (358), vol. 5, p. 56.

P.P. Sess 1834 (App. A, Part II), vol. 29, pp. 209a-211a.¹

P.P. Sess 1844 (565?, vol. 22, pp. 757-9, (598), vol. 24, p. 29.

S.R.O., HR13/4, HR Dalkeith, 1765-1849, 15 September 1833, 1 and 8 April 1834, 5 June 1835, 15 January, 8 April 1836.

Fasti, vol. 1, p. 317.

C.P., CHA 4.154.5, 15 December 1831, duke of Buccleuch to T. Chalmers, 4.186.21, 1832, J. Monteith to T. Chalmers.

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12. Annan, Dumfriesshire: agriculture, cotton, fishing.

Attempted experiment: 1822

Main motivator: Alexander Dirom of Mount Annan, personal friend of Chalmers.

<u>Population</u> :	<u>1791</u>	<u>1801</u>	<u>1811</u>	<u>1821</u>	<u>1831</u>	<u>1841</u>
	2,500	2,570	3,341	4,486	5,033	5,700

History of attempt:

1817: an assessment imposed in the parish.

1822: Dirom, one of the main heritors, wrote to Chalmers to tell him that the other heritors of the parish believed an assessment was still necessary and that Chalmers' retracing plans were only applicable to large towns where families lived closely together and collections were high. Dirom disagreed and asked Chalmers to come to speak to them, with the aim of persuading them to try Chalmers' system. It is unknown whether Chalmers did so, but no experiment was made.

1840: assessment = £800

1842: 162 paupers; sum distributed in relief = £779 4s. 2d.

1843: in his evidence before the Poor Law Commission, the Provost of Annan, James Little, spoke in favour of an assessment system, and believed it was necessary to relieve the able-bodied unemployed. Annan had a large number of agricultural labourers and handloom weavers who were finding it increasingly difficult to obtain permanent work.

Sources: S.A., vol. 19, no. 22, "Annan", pp. 447-452.

N.S.A., vol. 4, "Annan", pp. 516-536.

P.P. Sess 1844 (565), vol. 22, pp. 581-8, (598), vol. 24, p. 17.

C.P., CHA 4.19.61, 25 December 1822, A. Dirom to T. Chalmers.

13. Ancrum, Roxburghshire: small agricultural parish.

Attempted experiment: 1824.

Main Motivators: Gilbert Elliot, second earl of Minto (1782-1859), and Mr. H. Davidson.

<u>Population</u> :	<u>1792</u>	<u>1801</u>	<u>1811</u>	<u>1821</u>	<u>1831</u>	<u>1841</u>
	1,146	1,222	1,309	1,386	1,454	1,407

History of attempt:

1824: Minto contacted W.B. Shaw of Langholm concerning the experiment in Langholm along Chalmers' lines. Minto and Davidson were keen to implement a similar one in Ancrum. Shaw reported that Langholm was flourishing - the church collections up by one third, the assessment down by one half. Minto next approached Ancrum's minister, Dr. Thomas Campbell (?-1832), minister of Ancrum from 1793 until his death. The latter agreed that the poor rates were demoralising, and met Minto to discuss his ideas further. Campbell was unconvinced of the viability of Chalmers' scheme, and was also against the growing body of young Evangelicals in the church, Chalmers in particular. Minto was unwilling to risk proceeding without Campbell's support and jeopardising any future attempts to adopt Chalmers' ideas throughout the rest of Scotland. The plans for Ancrum were shelved at that point, but they never materialised later on.

1837: still a compulsory assessment, £150 a year for 30 paupers.

1842: assessment = £240 17s. 4d., 34 paupers, total relief bill = £288 7s. 4d.

Comment: Ancrum represented a parish where the main heritors were willing to attempt Chalmers' 'retracing process', but the minister was not. This represented another practical problem inherent in the nature of Chalmers' system - that is, gaining the support of all the various parties involved: heritors, magistrates, minister, kirk session. This was a practical difficulty, not inherent to the principles of his system itself, but if it was not solved it was obvious even in these early stages that the effort to reform Scotland's relief system in the assessed parishes would be still-born.

Sources: S.A., vol. 10 no. 23, "Ancrum", pp. 289-297.

N.S.A., vol. 3, "Ancrum", pp. 241-251.

P.P. Sess. 1831 (5), vol. 18, p. 402.

P.P. Sess. 1843 (ii), vol. 22, p. 69.

P.P. Sess. 1844 (598), vol. 24, p. 63.

S.R.O., CH2/1124, KSR Ancrum, 1836-1897.

N.L.S., Minto Papers, MS. 12122.84, 6 November 1824, W.B.

Shaw to earl of Minto, 86, 8 November 1824, T. Campbell to

earl of Minto,. 89, 21 December 1824, W.B. Shaw to earl of

Minto,. 91, 20 January 1825, W.B. Shaw to earl of Minto.

C.P., CHA 4.49.14, 19 January 1825, W.B. Shaw to T. Chalmers.

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 MS. 1808.157 Small Collections.
 MS. 2225.11, 12, 24 Monteagle Letters.
 MS. 2773 Charles Hutcheson MS. Diary, 1820-48.
 MS. 3435, 66, 189 Lee Papers Correspondence, 1821-5.

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